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THE NEW CLARISSA:

A

TRUE HISTORY.

BY

MADAME DE BEAUMONT.

VOL. II.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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BRITISH MUSEUM

THE NEW CLARISSA: A TRUE HISTORY.

LETTER XXIX.

CLARISSA TO MRS. DARBY.

My Dear Mamma,

I Depend entirely on yours and Mr. Balfour's prudence, with reſpect to what ſhall be judged proper to be done about my fortune: and, I ſend you a blank ſigned, to fill up as you pleaſe. I have not vanity enough to prefer my parts to thoſe of my virtuous mother. She knows the whole extent of my duty as a daughter; who has ſo well fulfilled the duty of a wife, in much more difficult

circumſtances than I am in at preſent. She has taught me, that the faults of our ſuperiors cannot authoriſe repriſals; and, I run no riſk of being miſtaken, when I take her for my guide.

I annex to this paper my marriage deed, and the baron's conſent, which authorizes me to diſpoſe of my whole fortune as I pleaſe. The lawyers whom we conſulted, having aſſured us both theſe deeds were neceſſary to render valid the reſignation I intend to make; I think this action alone, ſufficient to convince you of the favour Heaven has beſtowed on me, in granting me a noble ſpirited, and diſintereſted huſband. Who, beſides, in his place, would have reſolved to make ſo great a ſacrifice, and incumber himſelf with ſuch a poor woman as I am become?

The BARON *continues.*

ALL who had eyes and an heart, madam. Is there any fortune, however brilliant, which one could condeſcend to think of, after having had the happineſs of knowing your adorable daughter? Is ſhe not a treaſure beyond all other treaſures? It is not as a fond amorous huſband that I bear this teſtimony in her favour; ſhe has adorned my cottage but three weeks, and has

has already made all thoſe, who have had the happineſs to ſee her, my rivals. Without diſtinction of age, rank, or ſex, all admire, love, and reſpect her. She enchants at firſt ſight; and pleaſes the mind and heart, if we have the advantage of converſing with her a few moments. With ſuch a wife, my happineſs ſeems perfect; yet, it is not ſo, madam; I have another wiſh to gratify; to ſee, cheriſh, ſerve, and reſpect you. My heart muſt be inſatiable, ſurely, ſince it preſumes to wiſh for ſomething, in the center of all bleſſings. I poſſeſs a mother worthy of being compared with you; this is my Clariſſa's expreſſion; and, you are ſenſible he is a good judge. Had I another, I might boaſt of harbouring under my humble roof three wonders. What an addition to my happineſs, if I could once teſtify, otherwiſe than by letter, the reſpect and lively gratitude, which the great qualities of the reſpectable couple, to whom we owe every thing, have inſpired me with! Such an attachment and ſervices as we are obliged to Mr. Balfour and his lady for, are debts which leave thoſe who have contracted them, in an incapacity of payment; which would be an humiliating and diſagreeable circumſtance; if it were not for the conſolation of our benefactor's generoſity. Heaven grant,

may never be in a ſituation to ſound our hearts, in this reſpect; to ſpeak for myſelf only (for my wife has no need of ſecurity with thoſe who know her.) I would chearfully ſpill the laſt drop of my blood, to prove to our illuſtrious friends that they have not obliged an ungrateful perſon. My mother inſiſts I have not ſaid enough for her, and will ſpeak for herſelf.

BARONESS D'ASTIE TO MRS. DARBY.

NO, madam, it was not poſſible to expreſs the ſentiments of my heart for your virtuous, and amiable daughter; Heaven in beſtowing her on me, has completed my utmoſt wiſhes. I neither mean to pay you a compliment, nor do the honours of my ſon; but, indeed, he does not in the leaſt deſerve your treaſure. Not becauſe I have not long had reaſon to admire the good inclinations which Heaven has placed in his mind; but, this virtue which I have endeavoured to cultivate in him, has ſuffered a terrible eclipſe, and that of his wife is ſpotleſs. The penitent holds my hand, and is almoſt dead with fright, leſt, as he ſays, I ſhould do him too ſtrict juſtice. Before making a general confeſſion of his errors to you, he would have time to efface them by his repentance.

tance. He is desirous you should be witness of his conversion, that you may be disposed to forgive his past faults. He is afraid of alarming you about Clarissa's fate------He says, if he suffers me to go on, I shall tell you all, by protesting I will acquaint you with nothing. I will not deprive him of the merit of his confession by anticipating it.

I am perpetually making my dear daughter repeat all the circumstances of her terrible situation; and I see, with admiration, that she has ever acted as a person of consummate prudence and virtue, notwithstanding her youth. How was it possible to hate a person so perfect! I touch a delicate point, madam, and I am obliged to do it. My dear Clarissa was under a necessity of acquainting me with the origin of her misfortunes, to get me to approve the heroic sacrifice she is determined to make. From her sentiments and yours, a perfect conduct may be formed. I approve of her purchasing, if possible, the return of her father's love, by the present sacrifice of her immense fortune; this would not be buying it too dear. I approve, that she does not confound the rights of her children with her own. To preserve their right of inheritance is her sacred duty. To sacrifice her

perſonal intereſt in it, to deprive herſelf of the annual income ariſing from it, is an act of virtue; which I ſhould be ſorry ſhe deprived herſelf of. The motives of her ſelf-denial will ennoble her in the eyes of men; beſides the merit it will procure her in the ſight of God. An agreeable ſight for Heaven; Clariſſa becomes a farmer's wife; ſhe who might eclipſe the moſt opulent families! This condition of life has its ſweets, madam; they muſt have been experienced to find them out. If Heaven beſtows on our children, the bleſſing of the patriarchs, a numerous offspring; they will bewail their poſterity, that a great inheritance will, without doubt, take them from the tranquil and innocent way of life which they have themſelves enjoyed. My dear Clariſſa frequently makes this objection; riches ſeem to her an uſeleſs incumbrance, ſince ſhe ſees with her own eyes, how little is ſufficient to ſatisfy the real wants of nature. Thoſe of charity are a little more extenſive; nevertheleſs, ſhe perceives that, with what ſhe has, ſhe can provide for all; and regards the middling ſtation of life, to which ſhe is reduced, as a bleſſing which her children will want. Leave Providence to diſpoſſeſs them: I am obliged frequently to repeat to her after you, Providence can eaſily find means to make them poor, without

out you: if this ſtate is advantageous for them, let us perpetually pray for this favour for them: God is not accuſtomed to deny ſuch favours, as are aſked ſo ſeldom. Heaven bleſſed me with parents as rich in virtue, as deſtitute of the goods of fortune: the little eſtate I poſſeſs at preſent was all their patrimony. A marriage, I had no reaſon to expect, forced me from our happy indigence. I found, in conſequence of riches and grandeur, the chagrins, cares, and afflictions, which are almoſt inſeparable from them: my father exhorted me continually to preſerve my virtue; and told me, perhaps, in joke, that he hoped to ſee me poor. Heaven delayed fulfilling his deſires in this reſpect; I enjoyed the whole of my fortune, when it deprived me of this good father. This loſs was followed by the death of my huſband. At the heels of theſe two misfortunes, a number of unfortunate accidents followed, with a rapidity that ſcarce left time for breathing. Charged with the guardianſhip of my ſon, I thought it my duty to defend his rights; I defended them without animoſity, without perturbation of mind; I ſaw them took away by force, without hatred for the uſurpers. But, to return to our dear daughter, juſtice obliges me to acquaint you with what I frequently repeat to her; that, in-

dependant of her good qualities, ſhe will be a fortune to my ſon, when ſhe is reduced to what ſhe has at preſent, the baron's eſtate not exceeding one fourth of her fortune. We are indeed rich, for this country, where true bleſſings are found in abundance; becauſe, we have here few mouths for proviſions, and money is extremely ſcarce. If I had a mind to compliment you, I ſhould tell you, madam, that our hamlet is not worthy of a perſon accuſtomed to live in grandeur; but, I am ignorant how to make my language and heart contradict each other. I ſay on the contrary: come, madam, and adorn a place inhabited by ſimple honeſt men, enemies to all artifice: come into the abode of innocence and peace: here is your true territory; you will here find a perſon who will glory in giving you proofs, by her actions, of the tender and reſpectful ſentiments, with which ſhe has the honour to be, &c.-----

Sequel of CLARISSA's *Letter to her Mamma and Lady* HARRIET.

ACKNOWLEDGE, I am greatly indebted to God for the happy prejudice in my favour; which he has inſtilled into the hearts of thoſe I have ſo great an intereſt to pleaſe. I ſhall not in the leaſt abuſe this favour, and ſhall make uſe of it to acquire the virtues I am ſuppoſed to poſſeſs.

Harriet inſiſts on an exact account of the paſt and the preſent: be kind enough to inform yourſelf from her, if I do not favour you with any of the trifles, the recital of which would, doubtleſs, be tireſome to you. If by chance it amuſed you, I ſhould regard it as a proof of the lively intereſt, which maternal tenderneſs and friendſhip, make you take in the fate of a poor little farmer's wife, whoſe only merit is her love for you.

I wrote you my laſt letter on my diſembarkation. My huſband haſtened to acquaint his mother of our arrival in the kingdom; and, had the goodneſs to exaggerate greatly my trifling worth. This virtuous woman was already ac-

quainted with our marriage and 'flight, by Mr. Baker; though, he was not able to let her know what was become of us; which had cauſed her ſtrange apprehenſions. Our letter having made her eaſy, ſhe begged us not to hurry our departure; and to ſettle our affairs at Bourdeaux, in ſuch a manner as to have no occaſion to make another journey there. We have, therefore, conſulted able lawyers, about the manner in which the deeds I ſend you ought to be drawn up.

During the whole courſe of this affair, I have frequently been obliged to do myſelf violence, not to exclaim, Oh age! Oh manners! Madam, my mother-in-law, has had the goodneſs to ſend us a power to conclude, both our marriage, and our patrimonial conditions; becauſe, my huſband is not of age. When twenty-two thouſand livres in money, and twelve thouſand livres in jewels were mentioned, the lawyers, on whom our dreſs had made no great impreſſion, became very reſpectful; but, when the ceſſion of more than three hundred thouſand livres, which I was deſirous of making to my father, came on the carpet, they were ready to fall on their knees before this ſum; for, in fact, their

their reſpects did not in the leaſt regard the duty I fulfilled.

After their firſt aſtoniſhment was over, they began to make repreſentations. I can't take upon me to repeat their whole diſcourſe: it all amounted to theſe maxims; money conſtitutes our ſupreme happineſs; it gives honour, talents, virtue, friends: we ought to ſacrifice every thing to get riches; therefore, it is folly to renounce our own. Miſerable wretches! I died with envy to ſay to them: will our appetite ſerve to dine twice, when we have a great quantity of gold? does gold give us the faculty of being nouriſhed, cloathed, or lodged doubly? This, if you remember, is the language of harlequin, in one of Marivaux comedies; but, ridicule the thirſt of gold ever ſo much, it will always be, Regina del Mondo, Queen of the World. Our lawyers not being able to prevail on us to bend under the yoke of this imperious ſovereign, the deſtroyer of all virtues, drew up our writings; but, with lamentations, which were ſo comic, as to have excited my laughter, if pity for their dangerous prejudices had not prevailed.

This buſineſs being concluded, the baron waited on our archbiſhop. He received us as perſons, who had been mentioned to him in a very favourable light; an obligation we owe to Mr. Baker; who, according to his promiſe, had obtained for us a ſtrong recommendation from the apoſtolic vicar at London. Our prelate was ſatisfied nothing was wanting to render our firſt marriage a ſacrament; yet, as it was not conformable to the laws of the kingdom, to leave no room for chicanery or baſe deſigns, he publiſhed the bans at Bourdeaux, and in the baroneſs's pariſh-church once; becauſe, the abode of a minor is at his tutreſs's houſe; and, having allowed a diſpenſation for the ſecond and third time of publiſhing them, he married us himſelf in his own chapel, and did us the honour of keeping us to dinner.

I was a little embarraſſed about my bank notes; but a merchant at Bourdeaux hath been kind enough to take charge of this affair. Of all my jewels, only your picture enriched with diamonds, my watch, and my dear Harriet's, ſmelling bottle, are left; they are valued at twelve thouſand livres, but are worth double that ſum. I would not ſuffer them to inſert in the deed, a ring of two hundred guineas value, which

which I had made a preſent of to my huſband. This is the amount of all my treaſures.

They are much augmented within this hour, my dear mamma: I have juſt received a letter from honeſt Riding, in which I find incloſed, a bill of exchange for one thouſand livres *(a)*. He had this ſum in his hands, when the eſtate of my aunt was adjudged in favour of my father, and would not part with it. Oh! ſay no more, your Clariſſa is poor! In fact, ſhe is immenſely rich for this country. He deſires a receipt antedated; I have done it, without knowing whether I ought. Is not this a fraud; and is there any caſe, in which it is lawful to cheat? At all events I ſhall be able to reſtore it; the money ſhall not be made uſe of, till I am certain it is honeſtly my property. But, to continue my narrative—

Notwithſtanding the obliging letter, which, madam d'Aſtie wrote me, I could not help being confuſed at the thoughts of appearing before her: my misfortunes gave me a little the appearance of an adventurer; a quality which always prejudices a woman; becauſe, it is very

(a) He had only a thouſand livres in his hands, becauſe he had remitted Clariſſa the four thouſand he had told her of.

ſeldom

ſeldom ſhe has nothing to reproach herſelf with in ſuch a caſe. The teſtimony of my conſcience heartened me againſt my own ſcorn; but it would not have been ſufficient to make me eſcape the contempt of others; and, in ſpite of the fine name of philoſopher, which Harriet is pleaſed to decorate me with ſometimes, I felt myſelf nothing leſs than inſenſible of the public opinion. I ſhould, nevertheleſs, have braved it, I believe, provided, my huſband's mother had been ſatisfied of my innocence, with reſpect to the ſteps I was abſolutely forced to take. My fears were removed the very firſt moment I had the honour to ſee her. Imagine——No, imagine nothing at all, every thing you could fancy would be below the truth. Beauty, nobleneſs, virtue, and the graces, compoſe the countenance of my reſpectable mother-in-law: affable, though very diſcreeet and wary; gay without diſſipation, grave without ſtarchneſs; for my Harriet often ſays, that grave women are formal, even to the laſt degree. My huſband and I arrived at her houſe a day ſooner than we promiſed, ſo that ſhe was agreeably ſurpriſed to ſee us at her feet: ſhe bedewed us with her tears, embracing and bleſſing us, and I immediately found myſelf as free with her, as I have been with you, my dear mama; ſhe was making cloth;

cloth; it was for me ſhe ſaid ſhe worked. I had travelled like an heroine in a romance, more diamonds than ſhifts. This word diamonds made me recollect my intention of offering her my watch; I faſtened it to her apron, telling her, that, next to the pleaſure of offering it her, I could not receive a greater, than to ſee her accept it. I will receive ſomething more precious from my dear daughter, ſhe replied; her heart, her friendſhip, her confidence. Indeed, madam, I anſwered, I have nothing more of that kind to beſtow; it is already done, without the leaſt merit in me; for all this eſcaped me without my knowledge, the inſtant I had the happineſs to find myſelf at your feet and in your arms. She anſwered me by a tender embrace; and I confeſs, this half hour ſo ſtrongly reſembled that when I had the happineſs to ſee her firſt, that the confuſed remembrance made me think the aſſertion falſe, that there is no true happineſs on earth. We paſſed theſe firſt hours in an amiable confuſion, which entirely took up my thoughts, and it was the next day before I could examine my new dwelling. Indeed the baron ſpoke of it too modeſtly, when he called it a cottage. The firſt entrance is through a middling ſized yard, planted with ſeveral rows of walnut-trees, which form four walks. The

middle of the yard is a graſs plat of about fifteen feet ſquare, oppoſite to which is a ſmall flight of ſteps, which leads into a wainſcotted hall, furniſhed only with chairs with ſtraw ſeats, two walnut-tree tables, and white linen window curtains. There is ſuch a ſtrong air of neatneſs in this apartment, that I fancy I breathe a purer air there, than in any other place I was ever in: it has the morning ſun, but the vivacity of its rays is damped by a vine, which creeps about the outſide of the windows, and intercepts only the light which would dazzle the ſight. On one ſide of this hall is a ſmall kitchen, furniſhed only with bare neceſſaries; and on the other ſide a cloſet, which contains a well choſen library. Three rooms on the firſt floor compoſe the reſt of the apartments: not a bit of tapeſtry, but the walls, of a beautiful white, are ornamented with deſigns painted in freſco, ſurrounded with garlands of flowers, and a little paſſage in the middle: this is the work of the baronneſs. Behind the houſe is a little pavilion, containing a handſome chamber for a gentleman, two lodging rooms for ſervants, and a paved dairy ſo bright, that one's face may be ſeen in it: the beds are callico, and the ſheets ſmell delightfully ſweet. The houſe ſeems a little palace; but how ſhall I deſcribe the garden,

den, and the little grove which terminates it! The neatneſs and regularity ſeem to indicate the order which reigns in the miſtreſs's ſoul; it produces all neceſſaries in abundance. I was aſtoniſhed to ſee no flowers there: my huſband and my mother-in-law looked at each other and ſmiled. The baroneſs ſhewing me a large ſquare piece of ground in the middle of the garden, which was planted with all ſorts of kitchen ſtuff, this piece of ground, ſays ſhe, ſome years ago was planted with the fineſt flowers; my ſon cultivated them with his own hands, with the more pleaſure, becauſe he knew I was very fond of them. A reflection turned this parterre into a kitchen garden. How many poor wretches might be relieved at the expence of the trifling pleaſure we take? ſays I to my ſon. There are ſeveral families in this village, who do not poſſeſs a ſingle foot of ground, and are thereby deprived of a thouſand little comforts. Let us give up to them this little bit of ground, our income will not be leſſened thereby, and we ſhall have, by cultivating it, the delightful conſolation of working for Jeſus Chriſt: it will not produce a ſingle herb which will not be a flower of ſweet odour to him who regards all the ſervices we render the poor, as done to himſelf. Theſe words were the condemnation of

theſe poor flowers; my ſon inſtantly rooted them up: another word may again give them their exiſtence: my dear daughter, this kitchen garden ſhall again become a parterre of flowers, if you deſire it. I was ſtruck motionleſs with admiration. How ingenious is charity! ſaid I to myſelf; I thought myſelf charitable till now; I who have given to the poor only a ſuperfluity, which never cauſed me the leaſt privation. As this reflection had prevented my anſwer, my reſpectable mother-in-law thought ſhe had frightened me by giving me an idea of a virtue which denied itſelf every thing. My dear friend, ſays ſhe, pleaſures may be permitted at your age, which we ought to deny ourſelves at mine: that which you take in looking at flowers is a very innocent one, and it would be a real cruelty to deny a perſon this trifling ſatisfaction, whom the mediocrity of our fortune reduces to much harder denials. Rely on the baron's providing you a flower-garden as ſoon as the ſeaſon permits. Heaven forbid, replied I with vivacity: I ſhould think I committed a ſacrilege, if I took from the poor this ſmall relief. Who am I to prefer my pleaſures to their wants? Pardon me, madam, my ſilence was the effect of my confuſion. I perceive, I am as yet but in the alphabet of the chriſtian life; but if I

am incapable of finding out in my charity ſuch ingenious reſources for the poor, I ſhall at leaſt profit by your good examples, and will endeavour to imitate them. My mother-in-law anſwered me by a tender embrace. This, ſays ſhe, taking her ſon's hand, and placing it in mine, this is the daughter I begged of Heaven, and whom I would have preferred to the richeſt heireſs.

Obſerve, my dear mother, that I did not arrive till evening, that not a word had been ſaid about my little fortune; that my huſband, who knew the diſintereſtedneſs of his mother, had ſaid nothing of it in his letters; and that Mr. Baker, who thought me a vaſt deal richer, was deſirous of ſurpriſing her agreeably: ſhe had concluded, from the ſilence of her ſon, that I abſolutely had nothing, or, at moſt, but a trifle. The ſight of my watch, it is true, ſeemed to ſhew that, at leaſt, I came from a rich family; ſhe had been told I was a perſon of rank, and had learnt by Mr. Baker's letter, that religious motives had occaſioned my flight from my relations; wherefore ſhe imagined I could have taken nothing with me; for a girl of my age could not be ſuppoſed to have any thing of her own, except her trifling jewels. Her laſt expreſ-

preſſion gave my huſband an opportunity to mention what had paſſed in England. My dear Clariſſa would be a fortune for a prince, if ſhe brought no other fortune than her valuable qualities; but, madam, ſhe is beſides a rich heireſs, with reſpect to her fortune; and if an heroic virtue did not compel her to diſpoſſeſs herſelf, ſhe might paſs for one of the firſt perſons in the kingdom. He then related to my mother-in-law all the circumſtances of my life, and of my flight, and was interrupted only by the careſſes ſhe every moment beſtowed on me. Heaven is witneſs, my dear child, ſays ſhe, how much I deſpiſe riches; I would willingly give the whole world for one ſingle act of virtue; yet I rejoice that you have ſaved ſomething out of the ſhipwreck; it would have coſt you too much to have ſubmitted to the hard way of life, which long cuſtom had rendered eaſy to us, and I ſhall be charmed to ſee you a little more at your eaſe. Cannot I contract this habit alſo? replied I. In ten years it will be as familiar to me as to you; you do me great injuſtice, if you think me capable of accepting reliefs which you will not partake of. You ſhall learn to obey, daughter, ſays my ſecond mother, giving me a little pat with her hand, which I almoſt devoured with kiſſes. For inſtance, we ought, according to

cuſtom,

cuſtom, to have killed the fatted calf, for your huſband has ſome reſemblance with the prodigal ſon; yet you muſt be contented with half a lamb. The clock ſtrikes twelve; it is dinner time: go in doors, I ſee the gueſts coming, and eat the little feaſt which you ſhould have had on your firſt arrival, but for the agreeable trick you played me in coming late laſt night. At the ſame time the glaſs door which looked into the garden, opened, and two clergymen advancing towards us, ſaluted me with a politeneſs which I did not expect from country prieſts. Our repaſt was as gay as ſober; and my joy to find myſelf in ſuch good company, hardly permitted me to take notice that we were ſerved in earthen ware, and that our ſpoons were pewter. When our gueſts were departed, my mother-in-law aſked me what I thought of them. I anſwered plainly, that they ſeemed to me perſons of underſtanding, very polite, and well acquainted with the world. You would not ſuſpect them, ſays ſhe, to be ſaints; nevertheleſs few men deſerve this title better. Indeed, madam, I anſwered, I entertained a different idea of ſanctity; I thought a perſon who aſpired thereto, ſhould have a pale meagre countenance, a grave and auſtere mien: I ſaw nothing in theſe gentlemen which did not ſhew them

them to be good honeſt men; but then I obſerved nothing which denoted any extraordinary perfection; in ſhort, it never entered my head that they were perſons who aſpired at canonization. Neither do they ever deſire to be canonnized, though they do every thing poſſible to deſerve it. Our converſation was interrupted by a viſit we received from all the women and girls in the pariſh, who chearfully rendered this homage to the virtues of my mother-in-law, though there were amongſt them ſeveral farmers wives much richer than her. She careſſed them, and preſented them to me one after another, deſiring me to embrace them, and always found ſomething advantageous to ſay of each as they advanced. I made one remark which ſtruck me, that not one of theſe women took too much liberty: notwithſtanding the free gracious behaviour of the baroneſs, I never ſaw more reſpectful behaviour, I remarked my aſtoniſhment to my mother-in-law when they were gone. We obtain every thing, ſays ſhe, from theſe good people, when we require nothing; I have always behaved to them as you ſaw me to-day, neither familiarly nor haughtily: I have endeavoured to be uſeful to them; they know I love them; no more is wanting to keep them in their place: the poor never depart from theirs,

till

till the nobility quit their own place. The baroneſs had excited my curioſity about our curate and vicar, for it was with them we dined; ſhe began herſelf this chapter, and I am certain you will be charmed to hear their edifying hiſtory: but every thing ſhould have bounds; and this letter is already ſo long, that I am forced to finiſh, if it was only becauſe the poſt-man waits; and would not, I fancy, be troubled with the carriage of my letters for the future, if he gueſſed their contents; for, in fact, I ſhall have only the trifling events of the farm to acquaint you with, and theſe not worthy of a great lady like you. It is to you I ſpeak, lady Harriet, I who am only a poor little farmer's wife.

LETTER XXX.

LADY HARRIET TO CLARISSA.

AH! the poor little countrywoman is very impertinent with her great lady, and her, my lady. If I was not ſure my Clariſſa was in joke, I ſhould never forgive the latter part of her letter; I acquaint her theſe jeſts diſpleaſe me highly; there is no condition which debaſes a woman like her; there is none which ſhe would not ennoble. I think, indeed, I am fooliſh, to take a joke in a ſerious light; but, I was not miſtreſs of my pen; I was hurt by this expreſſion. Take care, I beſeech you, never to be wanting in reſpect, for I ſhould never forgive you. While I am in a humour for quarrelling, I muſt give you your ſhare, Mr. baron. You do not underſtand badly the intereſts of your ſelf love; but, you neglect thoſe of our curioſity. You will make your confeſſion to your mother, ſome years hence? And we, therefore—Do you imagine we have not as great a deſire as her, to be certain you have been a little libertine? No delay, we muſt have your hiſtory well particularized, to join to that of your wife. Who knows, but it may tempt me to become an author? This will not be very difficult;

ficult; nothing will be wanting, except to find the dates, or to ſupply them; for Clariſſa and I are not accuſtomed to mark any. This want repaired, behold, a new book, entirely finiſhed; a book which will contain nothing but truth; and yet, nothing probable. This will not hinder its ſale, the world will read, no matter what, it is a faſhion, a madneſs. What a pleaſure for me to hear the different opinions of the author and his work! For I propoſe to keep incog; and the author will be Madam ***. I ſhall be exactly in the caſe of Apelles behind his picture. An impertinent petit maitre will ſay, what a pitiful performance! it is quite inſipid; yet, the author need only have feigned the baron a little leſs reſpectful; or, if ſhe would preſerve the character of this, Amadis Montalvo was quite fit to rank with Lovelace, in the firſt Clariſſa; ſome attempts on his ſide would have enlivened the affair a little; and filled a few pages with the lamentations of the heroine. But, Heaven has made for her, men who in nothing reſemble thoſe of our times. Even ſea-faring men, in the preſence of this young lady, acquire a modeſty, ſeldom found among monks. In anſwer to this queſtion, if Clariſſas were multiplied, men of ſenſe would be multiplied of themſelves. When men exceed the bounds of

reſpect in their company, it is almoſt always the fault of the women. But this anſwer which would be a very good one, does little honour to our ſex; therefore muſt be ſuppreſſed. I ſhould then tell him, that an author who reſpects the morals, if he writes a romance, ſhould never ſuffer thoſe dangerous particulars, with which the Clariſſa and Pamela of Mr. Richardſon are larded, to compoſe a part of his work. He did not know the human heart, if he imagined ſuch accounts inſpired a deteſtation for vice; I know they have produced a different effect in many inſtances. Hardly any but young perſons read romances; the author therefore ſhould have them in view; and not ſuffer a ſingle word to enter which may be likely to excite impure ideas: the author of both theſe works intended to inſpire an hatred and deteſtation of vice, and did not perceive he was giving leſſons of the very vice he propoſed to combat.

But only mind where the deſire of ſeeing your general confeſſion has carried me, Mr. Baron: here is a ſtupid page of diſſertation, which you would have eſcaped if you had in earneſt ſet about acquainting us with your paſt life.

It

It is to you I ſpeak, Clariſſa, to make uſe of your own expreſſion: I make an oath not to eat an hearty meal till you have engaged your huſband to make this confeſſion; and, to encourage him thereto, I am going to make mine. That theſe romances expunged from our libraries, at preſent cover my table; that there are ſeveral of them, the reading of which may be of ſome uſe, and that great advantages might be reaped from them, if they were wrote as they ought. I know you are going to exclaim againſt the loſt time; in return, I wiſh you a pregnancy like mine to confine you to your couch, and give you the vapours, black vapours eſpecially; but no, condemn me, accuſe me rather of frivouloufneſs, than experience a ſtate like mine; it makes me ſtupid; you are ſenſible of it by reading my letter. I have filled four ſides, and have not yet ſaid any thing worth being read. I muſt fill another ſide, to do which I take the interval between two vapours.

I hold my head, I believe, for fear I ſhould loſe it. What has happened to you ſome time ſince, is as like a misfortune, as two drops of water are like each other; and this apparent misfortune leads you to the moſt tranquil ſtate that can be wiſhed for in life, a ſtate that

would be envied by the pretended happy of the age, if they could have an idea of it. I conſider a young rich heireſs entering into the world, as a prey on which the greedy hunters caſt a wiſhful eye. What efforts do they make to get her into their toils! The moſt audacious become reſpectful, and even ſervilely ſubmiſſive; they diſguiſe themſelves and become reformed, thoroughly determined to repair the time loſt in their debaucheries: they ſwear they are in love, and indeed they are ſo, but it is then only; and was the heireſs ſeparated from her eſtate, they would be conſoled for the loſs of her, by the poſſeſſion of her fortune: but ſcarcely are they maſters of it, before the fox reſumes his ſkin; the woman no longer finds a lover in her huſband. Oh! if this had been my misfortune, I would have got myſelf unmarried: I would have told the court, this is not the man whom I married, whom I ſwore to love and reſpect; I do not know this perſon, and I will have nothing in common with him. But ſuppoſing one is fortunate enough to draw a prize in this lottery, an huſband like the generality of men, with a mixture of virtue and vices, that cauſes an alternative of happy and inſupportable moments. Fine felicity! In ſhort, ſhe who gains the higheſt prize, that is to ſay, an huſband like

like mine, is not for all that perfectly happy. Buſineſs and other avocations deprive her of his company three parts of the day; they ſhare him between them, and leave his ſad wife in a ſolitude, the more painful, in proportion as ſhe is ſenſible of the happineſs ſhe is deprived of. You have nothing of this kind to fear, your mediocrity frees you from theſe important nothings called decorums. No inattentions, no endeavours to make you conceal your mutual tenderneſs; the innocent creatures among whom you live, far from being diſguſted at it, would return thanks to God for it. Oh! that I was a ſhepherdeſs with you, my dear Clariſſa! This revenue, which hardly ſuffices for the wretched wants of luxury and cuſtom, would then be a vaſt deal more than enough. Since your letter, I dream of nothing but cottages, gardens without flowers, and flocks; and when I wake and behold theſe fine hangings, beds of damaſk, pier glaſſes, and my toilet, I am ready to throw myſelf out of window. Procure me at leaſt agreeable dreams: I beg the journal of your life: and, if the poſt grows tired of bringing me ſuch precious parcels, I will ſend an expreſs for them. I muſt, among the bleſſings I envy you ſometimes, place in the firſt rank your reſpectable mother-in-law: wait ſix months, and you ſhall

ſee my lamentations on this article. I poſſeſs at preſent a treaſure which recompenſes the want of yours. With reſpect to me, our common mother exceeds the utmoſt ideas I formed of perfection, maternal tenderneſs and the delights of friendſhip; and I alſo am not behind hand in ſentiments of the moſt reſpectful tenderneſs. If my mind is wearied, my heart has not time to partake its diſquiet, I aſſure you; it has never been more buſy; and, though divided among three, you ſeem all placed there eaſily enough. I muſt however croud you a little, to make room for the dear creature I ſhall ſoon bring into the world; and then more room muſt be made for your children, which will be as dear to me as my own; for, in my opinion, my dear, our two beings make but one, in which every thing is in common. You muſt give your conſent to the perfect community. My mother won't permit me to ſay any more on this article, and pretends this is contrary to the conditions ſhe made us ſubſcribe, when ſhe entruſted us with your ſituation, which you wanted to conceal. I obey her, whatever it coſts me, but I hope my huſband's journey will produce ſome alteration in her ſentiments.

LET-

LETTER XXXI.

From Mrs. DARBY to the Baroneſs D'ASTIE.

MADAM,

I SHALL repeat your obliging words. If Heaven has granted you a daughter-in-law, ſuch as you prayed for, it has given my dear Clariſſa ſuch a mother and huſband as I would have choſe for her, if Heaven had left me the diſpoſal of her. I hope ſhe will render herſelf worthy of your goodneſs by her reſpectful obedience, and endeavour to follow you, at a diſtance at leaſt, in the practice of heroic virtues. I expect impatiently the time of profiting by your good example; but, however violent my deſire, I cannot quit lady Harriet in her preſent ſituation; eſpecially, conſidering her huſband is gone to London upon my daughter's buſineſs only. If I was writing to a leſs diſintereſted lady, I ſhould acquaint you that I expect to ſecure Clariſſa a fortune more worthy of your ſon. To render this diſcourſe more ſufferable, be kind enough to conſider this increaſe of fortune will enable you to ſatisfy your benevolent diſpoſition. I flatter

myſelf, my daughter will never entertain a ſentiment contrary to yours: I venture to aſſure you, that in this reſpect ſhe will want to be curbed.

I am, Madam,

With the moſt perfect eſteem,

Your very humble ſervant, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXXII.

From MADAM DARBY to CLARISSA.

BLeſſed be God, a thouſand and a thouſand times, my dear Clariſſa; he has fulfilled the deareſt of my wiſhes. You are placed in the boſom of a virtuous family, under the eye of a worthy mother, who will be your guide, removed from the illuſions of the great world, from opportunities of being corrupted, and are in a fair way of being ſanctified. What can I deſire more? I paſſed the ſhort interval we were together, in ſounding your heart, and diſcovering its inmoſt receſſes. I found nothing therein capable to alarm me, but I remained quite undetermined about the degree of perfection which God required of you. You had a great deteſtation of evil, a great attachment to your duties, and a mind juſt enough to eſteem your fortune, only as it put it in your power to relieve the wretched. This was already a great deal; and generally God does not require a greater degree of perfection in thoſe who are deſtined to live in the great world. you ſeemed called thereto, and I did not oppoſe your vocation. A ſecret voice told me, notwithſtanding, that ſuch

an happy diſpoſition muſt conduct you ſtill farther; I left you to Divine Providence; my expectations were not deceived; it has manifeſted its deſigns. Ah! how full of goodneſs are they for you! It is very difficult to live in the midſt of the world, without contracting its ſtains. We muſt expect to be generally reviled, if we live therein like Chriſtians. God ſpares you theſe combats: reflect frequently that you might not have had courage to maintain them, and leap for joy at the aſylum he has procured you. Submit yourſelf to the plan of perfection, which God has laid down with reſpect to you. I ſee by your letter you have not even an idea of what it conſiſts in. No, my dear, a pale complexion and an auſtere countenance are not at all the attributes of holineſs: it excludes not an innocent mirth, and the ſweets of friendſhip; or, rather, it is that alone which procures theſe ſolid bleſſings. You will learn, by experience, I am ſure, that madam D'Aſtie has found the way of approaching towards ſanctity in the moſt common occurrence, and in a way of life, in appearance, the moſt ordinary. As a proof, think of the parterre metamorphoſed into a kitchen-garden. This punctuality in correſponding with the impulſes of grace in trifling things, ſhews great virtue. I truſt you to the care of this

wiſe

wiſe governeſs; her example will teach you more than my cold diſcourſe. I join with my ſecond daughter, in requeſting a journal of your actions; add to it a liſt of your diſcoveries with reſpect to madam D'Aſtie: I ſhall endeavour from henceforward to take her for a pattern.

Harriet and I have often wondered how ſhe could give her conſent to your marriage without a more particular knowledge of you. You allow yourſelf, you had a little the air of an adventurer. She thought you poor. Mr. Baker was not ſufficiently acquainted with you to anſwer for your character and morals; there muſt therefore be a ſomething which I don't comprehend, an explanation of which I deſire. We alſo are very deſirous of knowing about the two clergymen who dined with you.

Lady HARRIET *continues.*

MORE, the adventures of your worthy companions in priſon. Our mother would have ſomething ſolid; ſhe is right. I would from time to time have ſomething amuſing, becauſe I am ſtill very giddy brained, and have got the vapours. Oh! what a fine thing it is to have the vapours! This diſtemper is a general ex-

cuſe, and the woman who has the honour to be attacked by it, may be whatever ſhe likes. Is ſhe abſent, peeviſh, impertinent, tireſome, or contradicting, it is all placed to the account of the poor vapours; they are my excuſe for taking the liberty to interrupt a good diſcourſe, for the ſake of prating only.

Mrs. DARBY *concludes.*

I was only going to finiſh, my dear; ſhe did not interrupt me in the leaſt. I embrace you and your dear huſband.

N. B. you need not have the leaſt ſcruple about Ryding's bill of exchange; it is what remained in his hands of your income; you have as great a right to this money as to any thing elſe whatever. Mr. Balfour maintains, that, without deviating from your intentions, he will make you rich; I praiſe his deſign, but have a notion God will render them uſeleſs; he wills you ſhould be poor, you will therefore remain ſo, and I ſhall not make myſelf uneaſy about it.

LETTER XXXIII.

CLARISSA TO MRS. DARBY.

YOU impoſe on me ſo great a taſk, my dear mama, that my ſiſter Harriet muſt be contented with a word only, in this long letter. Not to lengthen it unneceſſarily, I begin. Proteſtations of my ſentiments would be uſeleſs, you are convinced of them already.

The third day after my arrival here, I begged madam D'Aſtie to permit me to join in her country employments, and after much difficulty ſhe granted a part of my requeſt. I am too weakly, ſhe ſays, to join in the employments ſhe has habituated herſelf too by degrees, I muſt do as ſhe has done. As a beginning, ſhe has made me overſeer of the cows and dairy; a ſervant is under me who underſtands the buſineſs, but, ſhe herſelf has none. There is in particular a black cow, which is the beaſt of predilection; I have juſt learnt the motives of it: this is the cow of the poor. I keep ſeven for my own uſe, ſays the baroneſs; one more is no great expence or trouble. I conſecrated to God a fine heifer, whoſe milk is diſtributed to the poor, and her calves ſold for their advantage. Moſt of our

women

women wean their children at three or four months old, to take nurſlings. Theſe poor little creatures, abandoned for a ſtranger, would many of them periſh; I mix this milk for them with barley-water, or ſomething elſe adapted to their ſtate of health. I make of clay artificial nipples, and ſhew the mothers how to make uſe of them. Once a day I viſit all the nurſes; I ſuperintend the care, health, and cleanlineſs of theſe children, which has made our village famous for good nurſes. The principal merchants of Bourdeaux ſend their children here, which enables our peaſants to live very comfortably; we have no real poor here, except the old and infirm; and beſides, they are relieved. About twelve years ago, added the baroneſs, there were only ſixty houſes in this pariſh; this number is now trebled by marriages, ſtrangers who have ſettled here, and the old inhabitants, whom miſery and want had formerly drove away, and whom the hope of getting their bread has occaſioned to return. But, madam, ſaid I, in a ſurpriſe, how was you able to provide for the ſubſiſtence of ſo many perſons? Your income is ſo moderate, that I can hardly conceive how you maintain yourſelf; beſides, the land can't have increaſed in proportion to its inhabitants. No, replied the

baroneſs, but by better cultivation, it has produced threefold: ten times more inhabitants would not embarraſs us.

This country is full of uncultivated lands; here were immenſe tracts which produced only brambles, and were of no advantage to the proprietors. Miſery had broke the courage of the peaſant; moſt of them choſe rather to go a begging than die of hunger. I came here at the ſame time that the two clergymen you ſaw were appointed, one curate, the other vicar of this village: they might have expected a more conſiderable benefice, for this was only worth a little more than 20 pounds a year: we had been friends a long time, and they were perſuaded we might together do ſome good, and ſolicited this cure, which was not very ſtrongly ſought for, but in which they could live, becauſe they had a trifling fortune of their own. It may be ſaid, this diſtrict offered to the ſight, the moſt affecting picture of human miſery; old decrepid parents abandoned by their children, and buried in filth, almoſt ready to expire with hunger; naked, half-ſtarved, wan children; an entire ignorance of religion, which alone could alleviate their misfortunes; an habit of idleneſs, which prevented their even thinking of

of attemping to put an end to, or at leaſt to leſſen them. I ſhould have been diſcouraged at the ſight of theſe obſtacles, if I had not been ſuſtained by the ardour of theſe zealous brethren. They began to labour indefatigably at the inſtruction of theſe poor creatures; they gained their hearts, by giving them a little relief; and at length made them comprehend, that lazineſs leads to hell, and is the mother of all vice. Our examples finiſhed what their inſtructions began. My ſon, though yet very young, ſubmitted to labours proportioned to his ſtrength. I placed myſelf at the head of ſome women: theſe honeſt people knew we were not brought up to this, and were aſhamed of their idleneſs. A family, conſiſting of a father, a mother, and four children, was on the point of leaving its native home: the curate purchaſed for 200 livres a piece of ground, which contained 20,000 toiſes; he received theſe poor people into his own houſe till they had cleared this piece of ground. The work was difficult. The roots of trees were to be grubbed up which had formerly grown there, and which were ſpread very deep in the ground. The father, and the eldeſt ſon, who was ſixteen years of age, undertook this work: the mother and her four young children rooted up the buſhes, which had

had not taken ſuch deep root. In proportion as they cleared away theſe roots, they covered them with earth, and formed a kind of kilns. From time to time, the curate hired people to help them; ſo that in leſs time than could have been expected, the ground was entirely cleared, and well dug up. As the poor family knew this ground was to be the recompenſe of their labour, they worked with uncommon ardour: they afterwards ſet fire to theſe kilns; and, as this was done in the beginning of autumn, the rains ſoon tempered the aſhes, which were carefully ſpread over the ſurface of the earth: one half of this land formed artificial meadows, whoſe produce the firſt year was beyond expectation; the reſt produced corn. Facts are neceſſary to convince country people: the greateſt part had laughed at the undertaking; they now began to be more docile; there were few farmers who had not ſuch pieces of ground; they would willingly have performed the ſame operation, but one reflection ſtopped them ſhort. This labour might become very advantageous to the proprietors, by increaſing the value of uncultivated lands; but the cultivator would receive no other benefit than raiſing the rent of his farm, and perhaps his taxes. To remedy both theſe inconveniencies, Mr. Duboc, the younger (the name of our vicar)

vicar) undertook to apply to all the proprietaries, and obtained from them a deed, whereby they gave up the profits of these pieces of ground for fifteen years. Several of them furnished the farmers with money to buy cattle, on condition of being repaid again in six years. For my part, I wrote to the intendant of the province, and obtained a promise from him, that the parish should not be taxed at all higher, on account of the riches the inhabitants acquired by their industry.

Scarcely were these important articles settled, before an emulation was perceived, which we were careful to maintain and encrease. I had preserved at Bourdeaux some connections with pious persons devoted to good works; they readily gave their assistance towards this. Every week, prizes were proposed for those who cleared the greatest quantity of ground. This part of the country is naturally dry and barren; pits were sunk to collect the rain-water, and trenches cut to conduct the water into the fields, while the low places where the water stagnated, and formed bogs, were insensibly drained. Artificial meadows were every where made, which afforded us an opportunity of maintaining a great quantity of cattle, and we soon had the means

means to fertilize our lands from a plenty of dung. More hands were wanting than we had to do this work; our worthy paſtor and his brother procured them for us. They ſacrificed their little fortune, which they divided into two equal parts; eight thouſand livres were employed in purchaſing uncultivated lands; the remainder was deſtined to the maintenance of ſtrangers, whom the hopes of bread allured to us. One thouſand toiſes of ground cleared, were given as a ſalary to each family, that had laboured with us a year: and, as our paſtors had ſtill more at heart, the ſalvation of all theſe poor people, than their corporal relief, they eſtabliſhed the following rules. They ſet out to work at day-break; the rendezvous of the labourers was at church, where they joined in a ſhort prayer. At eleven they left off work, and went to church to attend divine ſervice; then reſted themſelves till three o'clock. Theſe four hours were not loſt, our labourers commonly employed them in ſleep, and found themſelves refreſhed ſo much thereby, as to be able to continue working till night. At firſt we found ſome difficulty to reſtrain the young people, who, after ſupper, would have employed part of the night in dancing, like the harveſt people. A little firmneſs, great praiſes beſtowed on

thoſe who abſtained from it, ſome trifling rewards, and familiar diſcourſes from the pulpit, on the danger of theſe nocturnal diverſions, ridded us of them entirely.

While our labourers were employed in cultivating the land, our vicar and I endeavoured to inſtruct ourſelves about every thing appertaining to agriculture. We learnt to diſtinguiſh different ſoils, and to mend them by different manures. We learnt to underſtand cattle, their diſeaſes, the neceſſary precautions to preſerve them in health, and the remedies proper for their diſtempers. We aſked advice of the men of learning, who devoted themſelves to this kind of ſtudy, and were ſoon capable of inſtructing them by joining practice to theory. I procured eight thouſand livres, from my friends, for our undertaking, without reckoning the cattle, advanced by particular perſons, who were payed for them towards the end of the fourth year.

Its diſtance from any principal road, or conſiderable town, (for it conſequently could have but a ſmall conſumption for its produce) was what rendered this diſtrict extremely poor. The inhabitants could not think of ſending it to Bourdeaux:

deaux: what peaſant would go fifty miles to ſell a few pounds of butter? After long conſideration I invented the following ſcheme.

A meeting was held of all thoſe who had cattle; and I propoſed to them to put their milk into a common ſtock. Tueſdays and Wedneſdays were fixed to churn the butter; and, for this purpoſe ſome women were choſe, who were diſpenſed with from going to work in the fields. They were furniſhed with new invented churns, which ſhortened their labour; and two of them were appointed to ſet out every Thurſday, to arrive at Bourdeaux on market days. The village was at the expence of a large cart, and they were allowed a man to drive it; and were to ſell all the butter, and other produce of the village. They were to return on the Saturday; and on Sunday, after evening ſervice, the curate, who received the money ariſing from the ſale, diſtributed to each their ſhare, according to their reſpective proportions. This method produced great advantages. We ſold our goods much better in this great city, than at the neighbouring markets; and, beſides, our labourers were not abſent from their buſineſs; whilſt before, each family was obliged to ſend a perſon two or three leagues

leagues diſtant, which was a day loſt. An accident furniſhed us a new method, which proved amazingly advantageous. A diſorder broke out among the cattle, by which, one of our peaſants loſt ſix cows in one week. All the reſt were terribly frightened at this, which inſpired them with a docility, of which we took the advantage, to make one common ſtock of all their cattle. The children had been employed in cleaning the lands of flint ſtones, of which they were full. Five large ſtables were erected, or rather, five of the biggeſt were enlarged; and the walls partly conſtructed with theſe ſtones. Every ſtable had women enough to take care of it; and one ſtable was always kept empty, to ſerve as an infirmary for the ſick beaſts. In the ſequel we were obliged to multiply theſe ſtables. Their whole produce was ſold for the common benefit, and the profit laid out in replacing the cattle which were loſt by the diſtemper; but we loſt very few: cleanlineſs; the ſeparation of the ſick cattle from the healthy, the choice and preparation of their nouriſhment, occaſioned our avoiding the calamities which all France was afflicted with in this reſpect. I am ſuperintendant of theſe ſtables, Mr. Dulac ſeconds me, and we are very attentive that thoſe do their duty who are intruſted with the care of them.

them. Our peaſants ſleep in quiet, becauſe they are ſenſible, nothing but a general mortality can ruin them. The dung is diſtributed in proportion to the number of beaſts which each furniſhes to the ſtock, and all are content.

The ſecond year, Providence opened to us another ſource of plenty. This was the method of hatching chickens in dunghils and ovens. It is true this produced but little the firſt year, we payed for our learning; but, inſtructed by our loſſes, the following years we were great gainers. The mulberry trees we planted the third year, produced a quantity of leaves the ſixth year; and was another ſource of riches which augmented every day. Every year the young people were married; and, when the parents were quite poor (which is never the caſe at preſent) we gave them one hundred toiſes of land cleared; the whole village contributed to ſow it, and to make them a preſent of two oxen and a cow. At preſent, the parents ſtand upon their honour, and would be very ſorry to be thought to have been ſuch bad œconomiſts, as to be under a neceſſity of having recourſe to the community. We have no poor, as I have already mentioned, except, the old, the infirm, and new inhabitants. Every day poor families arrive

arrive, whom we are not in a condition to ſettle; we relieve them, and expect aſſiſtance from Providence to provide for them further.

Madam d'Aſtie might have ſpoke much longer, without my thinking of interrupting her. I was in an extaſy; and knew not whether I ſhould truſt my own eyes, or believe her an angel in human form. When ſhe had ended her diſcourſe, a mechanical motion threw me at her feet; and from my heart, rather than my mouth, proceeded thankſgivings to the Moſt High, for the favour he had beſtowed, in granting me ſuch a pattern. Oh! how much did I deſire to be rich at this moment! but, God can ſupply my want of power; it is true, I had always devoted to him the greateſt part of my poſſeſſions, if I had thought myſelf miſtreſs to diſpoſe of them.

My mother-in-law raiſed me up; after having embraced me, a circumſtance ſhe never omits. I entreated her to permit me to aſk her ſome queſtions.

I enquired why her cows were not in the common ſtock, like thoſe of the other inhabitants. I put them there at firſt, ſays ſhe, to encourage

courage others. When our peaſants were thoroughly convinced of the advantage of the community, I took my beaſts away; we ſhould avoid giving theſe clowniſh, illiterate people room to think we have our own private intereſt in view, in things which are eſtabliſhed for the general good. They ſee plainly, I have not in the leaſt increaſed my fortune theſe twelve years; and are thoroughly convinced, when I propoſe any thing new to them, that I have no ſelf intereſted motives; on this their obedience is founded; it is at preſent ſo great, that they receive my advice as an oracle, and are always diſpoſed to follow it. And in what are they employed in winter? There are but very few days, replied my mother, that they can't find employment in the fields. Our men take this opportunity to cut down wood, and prepare props for the vines. We have carpenters who work on the largeſt trees, to repair our houſes, and build new ones; our young lads, by aſſiſting them, render themſelves fit to ſucceed them. They mend their ragged cloaths, make new ditches to carry off the water, threſh the wheat; in a word, every one finds ſome employment or other. As the evenings are very long, the children are put to bed early; after which, they aſſemble to ſpin in the old ſtables, which they

call taverns, and we have twelve of theſe in the village. The women ſit on one ſide, and the men on the other; each family by turns furniſhes light a week; the boys wind the thread. An old woman preſides over this aſſembly, and takes care every thing is in order. I viſit them every fifteen days; the curate and his brother do the ſame. But, ſays I, theſe people do not work in ſilence; does not this mixture of ſexes abuſe each other? Is it poſſible, among theſe clowniſh people, that no quarrels ſhould ariſe, no oaths, no indecent words, nor lewd ſongs be heard?

God has bleſſed the care of our paſtors, replied the baron: at preſent our peaſants are tolerably educated; aſſiduity in work has made them new creatures; they no longer have time to ſin, for we have taken away all opportunities of committing it; ſuch as dancing, alehouſes and the murmurs of poverty. They no longer learn bad ſongs, hymns have been ſubſtituted in their room; when we go to their night rendezvous, we relate to them ſome hiſtories within the compaſs of their underſtandings; there are ſome ſenſible perſons who know how to read, to whom we have given the lives of the ſaints, of the hermits, and ſuch kind of books.

They

They divert themſelves with relating what they have read, and the others liſten to them with pleaſure. Among thoſe who have returned to the village, after having been forced from it by miſery and want, there are ſome, who, having been in the army or at ſea, tell the others what they have ſeen in their travels, and this takes up the whole attention of the reſt. At firſt they were guilty of ſwearing, through cuſtom; a penny forfeit for each oath began the reformation, and it was compleated by baniſhing the guilty from theſe places for ſome days. Moreover, none are forced to come there, but they look upon them as recreations, and hardly any but the infirm miſs coming. At eleven o'clock, prayers are read, and the company retires. The curate reads prayers every morning at ſeven o'clock, and we have the pleaſure to ſee all our honeſt people attend the ſervice with piety and modeſty. He makes the hour earlier, in proportion as the days lengthen, ſo that they are always ready to go to work at day break.

But, ſays I to the baroneſs, if you take away dancing and other dangerous amuſements from your peaſants, they muſt be entirely without recreations? We endeavour to procure them innocent ones, replied ſhe. Every Sunday and

holiday, after the ſervice of the day, I aſſemble the women and girls in a barn: in winter, we play at ninepins and bowls; in ſummer, we uſe leſs violent diverſions. Our paſtors, on their ſide, amuſe the men with ſhooting with the bow and arrow, and other diverſions proper to keep up and augment their ſtrength: beſides, we have accuſtomed them to give little entertainments. On mine and my ſon's birth day, we regale the whole pariſh with a collation. The curate and his brother do the ſame. Our peaſants imitate us. The ſuperintendants of the evening rendezvouſes never fail inviting all that belong to their aſſembly; we are conſtantly at theſe little entertainments, where every thing paſſes, I aſſure you, with as much decency as mirth.

Are you not raviſhed at this account, my dear Harriet? We erect ſtatues to the deſtroyers of the human race, to conquerors: how much more precious to mankind, are theſe generous benefactors, whoſe only care is to procure the happineſs of all about them! The ungrateful age forgets their ſervices: after all, it would be unable to repay them; in Heaven only can they meet with a recompence worthy of them. My ſecond mother has taken me with her to repay the

the viſits we received. I have been in each family, and am quite aſtoniſhed. We dined in a village on the road in our journey here: indeed, my ſtomach turns whenever I think of the horrid filthineſs of the inhabitants of this village; and I am told, all the reſt reſemble this. I no longer wonder that diſeaſes depopulate countries. Theſe wretches breathe a poiſonous air; every door is ornamented with an infectious dunghill, or a kennel of ſtagnant water, which exhales peſtilential vapours: their houſes are damp and unwholeſome; in general, without windows; for a hole of a foot ſquare cannot properly be called a window; ſo that they receive light and air through the door only. If people are the real riches of a ſtate, as the baroneſs ſays in her memorial, how greatly ought theſe cauſes to excite the attention of government? But if pity for theſe poor wretches is not capable of exciting the generoſity of the wealthy inhabitants of cities, their own intereſt, at leaſt, ſhould make them join in their endeavours to remedy theſe inconveniencies. In theſe dungeons their children paſs the firſt years of their life; a time, when nature is moſt ſuſceptible of improvement or decay: they there imbibe the ſeeds of all the diſeaſes that parents afterwards find the inconveniencies of. I

I quote this motive only, becauſe it moſt immediately affects fathers and mothers. A ſubſcription in cities and great towns, for better lodging the peaſants, would furniſh healthier children, without oppreſſing the citizens. Here, all the houſes are four feet above the level of the ſtreet, and have at leaſt two large windows; not a ſingle kennel; the village is carefully levelled, and drains are made to carry off the water. The dunghills are at a proper diſtance, and all collected together into four heaps. My mother-in-law told me, that, at firſt, the neighbouring peaſants uſed to take the dung away in the night; this inconvenience was put a ſtop to, by encloſing them within an hedge, and guarding them with large dogs in the night. The inſides of the houſes are clean, neat, and paved with pebble: the children bring them home in little carts, and this accuſtoms them to labour. If you ſaw how rejoiced theſe honeſt people are when the baroneſs comes among them, with what reſpect they eagerly preſs to kiſs her hand, you would think her ſufficiently paid for what ſhe has done for them. If I had not abſolutely determined to be guided by her counſel, I ſhould have liberally beſtowed what money I have to concur to this good work. She tells me, ſmiling, that true charity is diſcreet; that I am only

only a ſpendthrift, that the poor ſhould be put in a way to get their living, but we ſhould prevent their growing too rich. The beſt thing I can do, I believe, is to profit by the favour which God has beſtowed on me, in giving me ſuch a guide; and the beſt way to do this, is to abandon myſelf blindly to her diſcretion.

Every ſtep I take here, furniſhes new ſubjects of admiration. Being arrived at the end of the village, I perceived a large ſpace, covered with linen cloth, almoſt bleached; the women were employed in carrying it away. This is the fruit of the winter evenings: the cart will go twice next week to Bourdeaux to ſell this linen. At preſent, we have ſix perſons in the village who weave theſe cloths, one of whom only is maſter; the five others are boys, taken from the foundling hoſpital at Bourdeaux, at twelve years of age; they were a year in Mr. Duboc's houſe for inſtruction: the vicar being appointed ſchoolmaſter, taught them to write and read, and has inſtilled into them ſuch ſentiments of piety, as to render them edifying to the whole pariſh. At thirteen years of age they were put apprentices to the trade of weaving linen; they enter next week into their twentieth year, and they will all five be married, together with ſeven other

lads, next week; their wives will bring them as a portion two cows from the common ſtock; they will be maintained a whole year at their father's-in-law: the maſter weaver begins to pay them wages this year, and their money will be laid out in furniſhing their little cottage. You have ſeveral empty then? ſays I to the baroneſs. No, child, replied ſhe, but we act in this manner on ſuch occaſions.

The whole pariſh receives the ſacrament once a month. The eve preceding the general communion is called the Lord's day, becauſe the produce of this day's work is conſecrated to charity. Some cut down wood, others bring it home, ſome work it into girders and beams, others procure ſtraw to cover the roof. The women lay aſide the thread they ſpin this day, and make it into a piece of cloth, which is ſold to buy nails, lime, and other materials. We have two maſons who have been ſettled here theſe ſeven years, who prepare the ſtone work, and are aſſiſted by young perſons, who are called children of good will. This is a fraternity into which we admit thoſe only in whom we remark talents joined to an excellent and natural diſpoſition; and it is a great honour to be admitted: I will let you ſee the ſtatutes of this fraternity;

as fast as these materials are prepared, they are piled up in a warehouse. The 16th of September is the day fixed for weddings, and none are married except on that day; that is, no young people; for those who have been married before, if they have a mind to marry again, chuse any time that is most convenient to them. The young people are prepared for this ceremony, by explaining to them, during a month before, the duties of a married life. These honest people, whose confidence I have, generally consult me about the marriage of their children; and, as I know them perfectly well, I spare no trouble to match them properly. This day is a general holiday for the whole village. Tables are spread under the trees; and, not to put the families to too great an expence, every one, two days before, brings something or other; some fowls, others a lamb. Their pastors and I set an example of this liberality. The married couples sit at the first table, where my place always is: they pass the remainder of the day in innocent diversions; and the next morning the children of good will, assist the masons in building the houses of the new married couples. As the materials are ready, and the houses, though sufficiently strong, are simple and uniform, they are soon finished, and have time to dry during

the whole winter. But, replied I, you want doors, windows, locks, and a thouſand other things. Almoſt every thing is to be met with in the village, anſwered my mother-in-law: every year we take five boys from the foundling hoſpital: the hoſpital for ſeveral years has given a little premium to the maſter who takes them; ſome are put to huſbandry, ſome to cartwrights, others to maſons, joiners, &c. and when in ſpring the houſes want to be finiſhed, the great number of hands we employ ſoon finiſh the work. With reſpect to the lockſmith's trade, we ſhould diſdain to faſten our doors, were it not for ſtrangers. Our peaſants have a deteſtation for theft, even for ſtealing a trifle; therefore we only faſten our outer doors; and, as a ſingle lock is ſufficient for each houſe, we buy it ready made at Bourdeaux. I ſhall never have done aſking you queſtions, ſays I to madam D'Aſtie. How have you been able to bring all theſe people to comply with regulations, prudent indeed, but rather rigorous?

The firſt years were very laborious and fatiguing, ſays ſhe; but religion, the conſequence of inſtruction, ſurmounts all obſtacles. We had ſwearers, drunkards, and perſons attached to many other vices; moſt of them are reformed;

formed; ſome are dead, two only having left us, finding themſelves excluded from all ſociety; for the incorrigible are baniſhed from all our aſſemblies. During our twelve years labour, all our young people have been brought up in our way; they fear God, and mutually love each other. The whole village forms but one great family, and I don't believe one mortal ſin is committed therein during a whole year. Our honeſt folks, always employed, have not leiſure for temptations: if any diſpute ariſes, the ſun does not ſet while they are at variance; the difference is ſoon ſettled. Our peaſants are convinced we love them, and that we would not commit an unjuſt action for the world; they regard us as their parents, the authors of their conveniencies of life, and therefore place a blind confidence in us.

I enquired of my mother-in-law what ſubjects were moſt inſiſted on in their inſtructions. We ſtrongly inculcate theſe grand principles: be juſt towards God and man; do to others as you would be done by. We teach them, that, to be juſt towards God, they ſhould remember him in all their actions, and perform them in the manner moſt proper to pleaſe him. We incline them to have an affection for his ſervice,

by making them remark, the bleſſings he ſhowers down on them, and compare their own ſituation with that of the neighbouring peaſants. The old inform the young, of the difficulties and miſery they experienced in their youth, and exhort them inceſſantly to bleſs God, who has exempted them from their diſtreſſes. You will here ſee no ſad melancholy people, even among our ſick; our fields reſound with hymns and thankſgivings; in a word, it is here that happy men are to be found. To the ceremonies of our marriages we join another, added my mother-in law.

At firſt, we received new inhabitants without difficulty. Two circumſtances have rendered us more circumſpect. The firſt was the difficulty of procuring them ſubſiſtence; we are ſurrounded with uncultivated lands, which would come at a moderate price, but we can only buy a little each year for want of money. The ſecond, which ſeemed moſt important, was our fear leſt the new comers ſhould corrupt our peaſants; we have therefore, for the laſt eight years, eſtabliſhed a kind of noviciate. We refuſe work to none, and never give any other relief. We offer a pickaxe, or ſome other working tool, to beggars. The idle make off as faſt as they

they can, and we are rid of them; ſome endeavour to work, and thoſe we encourage and inſtruct: they are lodged in a ſtable deſtined for this purpoſe, but they keep among themſelves, and until they are entirely reconciled to labour, are not admitted to our aſſemblies and diverſions. If they perſevere, at the end of three months, they enter into their noviciate, in which ſtate they remain nine months; and then, if we are ſatisfied with their behaviour, we promiſe to incorporate them. Frequently whole families come, ſometimes boys; we endeavour to keep them in continual employment, and by that means correct their vices. We ſhall receive eleven families the enſuing day of marriages, and we hope Providence will afford us the means of eſtabliſhing them. Providence has found the means. Half the ſum that honeſt Ryder ſent me ſhall be devoted to this good work. I ſay half, becauſe the whole, which I would have chearfully given, was refuſed. Next Sunday will be a meeting of the elders, to determine in what manner this ſum ſhall be employed. I will give you an account of the reſult of this meeting, and of our country diverſions, in my next letter.

My huſband conſents to make the confeſſion required by my dear Harriet. Your ſurprize at the readineſs with which madam d'Aſtie gave her conſent to my marriage, will ceaſe when you have read the letter Mr. Baker ſent her; but to underſtand it thoroughly, it ought to be preceded by my huſband's hiſtory; I ſhall therefore delay ſending it till then.

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LETTER XXXIV.

LADY HARRIET TO CLARISSA.

I Appeared ſo contemptible to myſelf, after reading your letter, that I had not courage to write to you for ſome days. Be aſſured, my Clariſſa, that this letter has at once made me ten years older; and, that my way of thinking is ſo altered, that you would think I was metamorphoſed. You know me; I eaſily give into extremes. If Mr. Balfour had been at Paris, I ſhould have turned his brain, if he would not have obtained for me a place in your corporation. How! ſaid I to myſelf, are we poor with one thouſand five hundred pounds a year, and, does the reſpectable baroneſs d'Aſtie, with fifteen guineas a year only, find the means of providing for all her neceſſities, and poſſeſs an overplus for charitable uſes! Let us learn to be rich near her. We would only be happy: ſince happineſs can be purchaſed at ſo little expence, let us not be ſuch fools as to loſe ſo good a bargain. Our mother, my dear, has moderated my impetuoſity. She has obſerved to me, that God wills that every ſtation ſhould be filled, and that we do no good action, when we depart from the place, in which Providence has fixed us. I am, therefore,

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confined to live with babies; for all women ſeem ſuch to me, compared with yours. When I ſee them knotting, embroidering, ſhuffling cards and drinking tea, I wiſh to ſay to them; Spin, ladies; work, riſe early in the morning like my heroines, and you will no more have the vapours; I ſpeak from my own experience, my dear, you have cured half of mine; induſtry kills them. If you ſaw my chamber, you would take it for one of your ſtables, which you call taverns. Our mother, my two women, and myſelf have ſet up our diſtaffs; the whole houſe is poſſeſt with the demon of induſtry; even the lacqueys are learning to knit in the anti-chamber. I excite the laughter of the ladies who viſit me; they can't conceive, how I can patiently ſubmit to ſuch mean employment; and I ſhan't be able to comprehend ſoon, how they can paſs half the day in bed, the remainder at the toilet, cards, or in uſeleſs viſits. You have reconciled me to the right path; and, if God has not found me worthy to become legiſlator of a whole village, I am, at leaſt, determined to play this part in my family; and on my eſtate when my affairs are finiſhed. I have not yet any poſitive news about yours; my huſband acquaints me all goes well, and no more. I am in the ſixth month of my pregnancy, and my health is entirely recovered;

vered; I uſe a great deal of exerciſe, have a good appetite, and take only eight hours ſleep; in ſhort, I am quite a new creature, and ſo well, that I ſhould be capable of a journey to lie in at your terreſtrial paradiſe, if our affairs did not oblige us to ſtay at Paris another year. I am told this place is beſt for me; ſince God has placed me here, well and good.

Our mother aſſures me it is abſolutely neceſſary I ſhould be a ſaint; at theſe words I ſet up a cry of aſtoniſhment and fright. You cannot think ſo, madam; have I then the likeneſs of any ſaint you ever heard of? I would love God with all my heart, and believe I do ſo. I hate evil; my unhappy neighbour excites my pity and charity. It is true, that I love to divert myſelf with my neighbour's follies, when he is in eaſy circumſtances; for was he in diſtreſs I would be blind even to his faults. Is it my fault that I cannot help ſeeing them; does it lie in my breaſt not to be the Democritus of my age? It is a diverſion which offends nobody. It diverts thoſe who hear me. The patients whom I ſhow in their natural ſhape, are either ignorant of it becauſe they are abſent, or have the complaiſance to laugh at it with me; I know ſome who carry their goodneſs ſo far, as to take my irony for praiſe,

praiſe, and ſay they are obliged to me for it. You ſee a perſon muſt be very preciſe to take my gaiety in a wrong light. I love myſelf, the comforts of life, and my pleaſures. Is not this natural? Except Mr. Balfour, I don't know a ſingle perſon in the univerſe who takes greater care of ſelf than I do; and where's the crime? The world is ſilly enough to eſteem people only, according to their dreſs, complexion, and a thouſand other trifles. Is it a ſin to comply with this folly? I wiſh it was the faſhion to wear a dreſs, that cloathed us from head to foot, that could be put on in a minute; I would be the firſt to ſubmit to the faſhion, provided others were obliged to conform too; for I would not be the only perſon in a ſluttiſh undreſs, among a company of ladies full dreſt. You ſee I am humble, Clariſſa; and have abated ſomething of the opinion I entertained of my charms; I no longer think dreſs neceſſary only for middling beauties, and abſolutely hurtful to perfect beauties. I ſee here many ordinary women, with whom I would exchange faces, however regular mine is. But the ſhape, an Engliſh ſhape; I find mine of a ſtiffneſs which cannot bear the eaſy negligence of a French ſhape, where all is eaſe. Theſe reflections would never have entered into the head of a young ſaint, they fill mine; therefore I can't

can't become one: all theſe trifles, which are not in themſelves criminal, are obſtacles. I ſay theſe things are not in the leaſt criminal; for I have not yet met with a man who is not an hundred degrees inferior to my huſband; you muſt ſuppoſe, that, ſeeing them in this light, I have no great deſire to pleaſe them. This, Clariſſa, is the fine reaſoning I have juſt held with our mother, concerning my vocation to ſanctity. This was her anſwer.

If dear Hariet had vicious habits to correct, violent paſſions to ſurmount, or wicked thoughts to purify, ſhe ought not to think ſanctity impoſſible; yet, I ſhould pardon her trembling at the thought of the painful victories ſhe had to gain. Nature does not like to ſuffer to reform; but ſhe allows herſelf ſhe is prevented by trifles only, which her reaſon condemns, and for theſe trifles ſhe refuſes to fulfil the deſigns of God on her. No, I do not doubt but ſhe will now bluſh, thro' chriſtianity, at thoſe faults which ſhe will bluſh at ten years hence, through maturity. I pardon her ſelf-love, her taſte for dreſs, &c. provided—My mother ſtopped at this word, out of meer malice. She imagined I would preſs her to finiſh, ſhe even longed for it. Had ſhe been any other perſon, I ſhould have left her in poſſeſſion of her ſecret, which

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was none to me; her eyes had already told me, what ſhe pretended to make ſuch a difficulty of telling; but, ſhe has ſuch an aſcendancy over me, that I can't reſiſt her deſires; ſhe was deſirous I ſhould aſk her, and I did. She deſires as lively a charity for fools, the preſumptuous, and ridiculous, as for the poor unfortunate: ſhe pretends theſe laſt merit leſs compaſſion than the others; becauſe, the diſorders of the mind are infinitely more dangerous than the ſufferings of the body. Certainly theſe two women have ſecret intelligence with each other. I mean Mrs. Darby, and madam d'Aſtie; they ever return to this precept, Do not to others what you would not have others do to you. What do you think will be the reſult of all this? I ſhall become the moſt inſipid perſon that can poſſibly be imagined. This fine work is already begun. I promiſe a company a pleaſant ſtory; our mother in the midſt of my career, perceives that the jeſt is to be at this poor neighbour's expence, whom ſhe loves ſo generally, and darts at me a ſuppliant glance, as if to beg mercy for him; and, behold, I become quite inſipid, and ſit my auditors yawning, inſtead of making them laugh. An embrace, an approbation from this mother, conſoles me for this misfortune. I don't in the leaſt merit Heaven thereby, I

ſay; for, in truth, my only motive is to pleaſe you. She would perſuade me that I am miſtaken, and that I have too good a heart not to deſign to pleaſe God, my benefactor, maſter, and true father; ſhe ends with telling me, ſhe won't examine my motives, which will be purified by degrees; and, that I am, at leaſt a gainer, by correcting a bad habit.

Where are theſe people, who tempt us on Providence, by making us remark the diſorders which happen in the world? For my part, I ſee God as an imperious maſter, who ſports with the bad deſigns of the wicked, and makes them ſerve as inſtruments of his adorable intentions. Mr. Darby, for many years, gave himſelf up to the perverſity of his heart. He makes a ſaint of our mother, who, with another huſband, would have had only common virtue. He would engage you in the ſacrilegious union, to poſſeſs your fortune; this is his intention; that of God, is to make uſe of this exceſs, to awaken the conſciences of the two accomplices, and bring them to repentance. He never ceaſes purſuing you with an inconceivable averſion; therefrom reſults to you the moſt happy marriage, and both for this life and the life to come, a courſe opens for heroic virtues, and into the bargain, a mo-

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ther for me, who fulfills all the duties annexed to this relation, with a perfection, from which, I have already reaped the moſt precious fruits. Serioufly, my dear, I will ſpare nothing to profit by this grace; and, I every day feel my confidence and docility, encreaſe for our worthy mother.

Mr. Balfour writes me word, that the Engliſh biſhops think of perſecuting. Searches are made in all the countries to aboliſh popery, and prevent the ſecret exerciſe of this religion. This news has juſt been confirmed to me, by a fanatic, who, promiſes them Heaven as the reward of their zeal; I can hardly think the nation in general applauds it. The foundation of the reformation is liberty of conſcience; every one, ſay the reformers, receives the light of the holy ſpirit to interpret the ſcripture. Conſequently all ſenſible perſons reſpect and cheriſh the catholics, who are honeſt, and good ſubjects. The quakers who reject baptiſm inſtituted by Jeſus Chriſt, are tolerated at London, and in all places under the Britiſh government, and are ſuffered to have public places of worſhip. Why deny us our private chapels? Would they reduce us to deſpair? I don't believe it, the king is too good, the government too enlightned to enfringe, againſt the

the catholics alone, the law, which permits every one to believe according to their own way. My fanatic would have quoted the examples of the kings of France; but, I proved to him, that the caſe was quite different. A whole kingdom follows a religion, with which it is content, for upwards of one thouſand two hundred years; a ſmall part of the nation wants to introduce another; thoſe who are in poſſeſſion oppoſe them, this is natural. Don't imagine I think them authorized to torment the new comers; no; religion forbids perſecution; let them think wrong if they will, we are accountable for our thoughts, only to God; the laws have a right over our actions alone, and may oppoſe novelties which would diſturb ſociety. The caſe is very different in England: the modern catholics, have been guilty of no innovations, they have antiquity to plead in their favour, and ought to be left unmoleſted of courſe. Henry the Eighth found their anceſtors in the ſame ſentiments they poſſeſs at preſent, let them be left in them. I will tell you what I will do, ſays I, to this gentleman, I won't yield to any Engliſhman, in love for my country; I love my king, our laws, and liberties, and I will make uſe of mine. I will ſettle in the diſtrict of Bourdeaux, and will carry with me my perſecuted bretheren. This will depo-

pulate the kingdom; for my example will be followed; and the biſhops muſt be thanked for this, who take the liberty to deprive us of the right, which every Engliſhman has to be free. Luckily my fortune is in the public funds; I have wherewithal to form vaſt colonies here.

It would, nevertheleſs, coſt me a great deal, to baniſh myſelf from my country, my dear; why won't they leave things on their former footing, we are content to be excluded from all dignities, to pay double taxes, to be in danger of being deprived of the patrimony of our fathers in Ireland; becauſe a diſtant relation, by changing his religion, ſupplants the right heirs, the children of the deceaſed. This, in my opinion, is ſufficient, and already too much. Prudence obliges thoſe who are at the head of affairs to ſtop here, unleſs they would force us to fly our country.

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LETTER XXXV.

MRS. DARBY TO CLARISSA.

I Sincerely ſhare, my dear Clariſſa, the admiration of my ſecond daughter; it retards my being aſſociated with you in your good works; but, God has ſpared me one here, which I diſcharge with the greateſt pleaſure in the world. Your ſiſter Harriet has an excellent diſpoſition, and only the fault of eighteen years of age. She does not deceive you, when ſhe ſays, ſhe is all of a ſudden become a new creature. Her huſband will hardly know her at his return. He does not explain himſelf, about the means he propoſes to make uſe of to ſettle our affairs; but, he inſiſts he ſhall certainly ſucceed. However you ought to be eaſy; I have his word of honour that your intentions ſhall be followed with reſpect to your father; and, that he will reſpect the orders of Providence, which ſeem to have deſtined you to be ſanctified through poverty. Harriet has given you a long account, which diſpenſes me from a longer letter; I foreſee that the unravelling of our affairs, will give me occaſion to write a much longer letter; and I ſpare myſelf for that. My humble reſpects to the ba-

roneſs. This is not a compliment without reality; I ſee no one who has a greater right to thoſe of all mankind. I embrace my dear child, and her huſband, whom ſhe does not deſerve, if he reſembles his mother.

LETTER XXXVI.

CLARISSA TO MRS. DARBY.

I Triumph, I ſhall not keep a penny of the money I received; I have pleaded the cauſe of the poor, and God has made me eloquent. This is what I alledged in favour of our peaſants. If my fortune was confined to what I poſſeſs at preſent; it would be right to think about my children, if God gives me any: I could then, I think, in conſcience, conſecrate to the poor only the money I ſpared from my luxury and pleaſures; but, have I not conſented they ſhould labour to be benefited by my donation? By adding what I poſſeſſed when I came here to your little fortune, which you had from poor Mrs. Coſby, we ſhall have about one hundred and forty pounds per annum, which is more than enough to bring up my family, eſpecially, as I and the baron are reſolved to make uſe of no mercenaries in their education. My preſent ſituation will procure them an habit of moderation, a good ſtate of health, pure morals, and will teach them to be ſenſible of, to ſhare, and to relieve, the diſtreſſes of the poor; I ſhall very ſincerely bewail them, when a great fortune ſhall ſnatch them from all theſe bleſſings,

and afford them an opportunity to loſe them. I have engaged, beſides, to confine myſelf to this one ſacrifice, while my fortune remains in its preſent ſtate. Madam d'Aſtie will not conſent to the pleaſure I ſhould take in augmenting her trifling income; it was with difficulty ſhe conſented to accept fifteen guineas for the year I am to paſs with her; which, ſhe ſays, will be ſufficient to defray all expences; I ſhall, therefore, be reduced to hoard a treaſure, which worms and ruſt may deſtroy, and robbers take from me; and, as a recompence, ſhe permits me to make this trifling ſacrifice. I have juſt informed you that I have only this year to paſs with my reſpectable mother-in-law; this ſacrifice is the greateſt that could have been propoſed to me, but I muſt obey. This order has been iſſued in conſequence of the aſſembly of our peaſants.

Notwithſtanding the good that is done in our pariſh, our paſtors and their aſſociate have ſtill more exalted views. It was neceſſary, ſay they, to humour the weakneſs of perſons whoſe habits were already formed; we therefore kept the meum and tuum, thoſe fruitful ſources of all the misfortunes of the univerſe. They are deſirous of conſecrating a place where theſe words

ſhould

ſhould never enter, and of whoſe happy inhabitants, it might be ſaid as of the primitive chriſtians, their goods were in common, they had but one mind, one heart; and we are deſigned to be at the head of this community.

There is, about half a league diſtance, an hill covered with buſhes; it has good ſprings, and an excellent expoſure. It may be purchaſed at a very moderate price, for the proprietor reaps no advantage from it at preſent. At the foot of this hill we propoſe to ſettle ſome of our inhabitants, and form a little hamlet. We have fifteen children of good will, and ten foundlings who are to be married next year; my huſband and three more who are married this year, in all make twenty-nine families for this hamlet, which will be called *the Chriſtian Union*. Mr. Duboc, the younger, goes with us, and undertakes to bring up the foundlings, and other children of the village, till their firſt communion. My huſband founds this little college, for which purpoſe he ſells the ring I gave him. The fifteen children of good will, relinquiſh to their families their right of ſucceſſion; their wives follow their example, and the three of this year give up whatever they have received, on condition their families aſſiſt us in clearing the land, and building our houſes.

The great village undertakes to furniſh us with proviſions, for which they are to be paid. All our meals are to be love feaſts; that is, in common, and in my favour the poorneſs of the nouriſhment is mitigated. The bread will, on my account, be leſs black; we ſhall eat meat three times a week, the reſt of the week garden ſtuff. A large hall will contain us at meal times, during which, one of the ſchool-boys will read to us. Some aged women, of the other village, who are widows, have requeſted leave to wait on us. Two are appointed for the kitchen, and the others are to take care of an infirmary, which is to be placed at a diſtance from our habitations, that we may breathe a pure and wholſome air. This infirmary will ſerve for the ſick of the village, and thoſe of the hamlet are to take care of them by turns. Our lands are to be ſown with the overplus that remains after purchaſing the eſtate; the corn neceſſary for the ſubſiſtence of the colony, is to be furniſhed by the village, and is to be repaid out of our firſt crop. The hamlet is never to contain above ſixty families, who are to be choſen from the moſt exemplary. Thoſe children of the inhabitants, who, by marrying, ſhall return to the village, are to be portioned at the expence of the hamlet. This money ſhall be taken from the box, into which,

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all the profits that ariſe from the wares and work of the inhabitants, ſhall be depoſited. With this money a quantity of ſtuffs, linens and other neceſſaries ſhall be bought for the uſe of the coloniſts. This warehouſe ſhall be under the care of two widows, who ſhall diſtribute to each family the fixed habits, and ſhall take the old ones back to mend; and when any child is born, ſhall furniſh it with all kind of neceſſaries.

If any coloniſt is diſguſted with this way of life, or behaves in ſuch a manner as to be excluded, he ſhall receive the value of what he loſt by coming to the mountain; but if he brought nothing at all, ſomething ſhall be given him to enable him to ſettle himſelf in the village or elſewhere.

The coloniſts muſt never forget, that they aſſembled together, to imitate the lives of the primitive chriſtians, who had but one heart and mind, and whoſe charity extended even to the heathens; much more ſhould they preſerve an union with their parents, and the inhabitants of the pariſh whence they came.

As often as time will permit, they are to go to the village to attend divine ſervice, and may dine with their relations and friends, remembering, that great virtue, modeſty and good nature is expected from them. Only in the evening, they muſt aſk permiſſion of their paſtor to ſtay in the village, on condition of returning at night to lie in the hamlet. If any misfortune ſhould happen to the village or hamlet, they are mutually to aſſiſt each other to repair it; the coloniſts eſpecially, are never to forget the place from whence they came. And as they poſſeſs nothing of their own, if they become infirm, and are incapable of getting their livelihood by their induſtry, they are to be maintained and provided for at the expence of the colony, in a place ſet apart for the aged, and thoſe in a ſtate of recovery from ſickneſs.

In caſe of future contingencies, the colonies ſhall aſſemble, to determine what is beſt to be done. The clergyman, for the time being, over them, ſhall have two votes, and preſide at the aſſembly. The ſeparation of the hamlet ſhall not in the leaſt withdraw it from the juriſdiction of the mother pariſh, to which it ſhall punctually pay its tythes.

A ſum

A ſum of money ſhall be hoarded up, not to exceed three thouſand livres, as a fund for extraordinaries, and to portion thoſe who are deſirous to return to the village; but if any one is excluded for any ſcandalous crime, he ſhall only have half the ſum that is given to others. But if God ſhould bleſs the colony ſo far, as to have more than the above-named ſum, and their ſtated proviſions; the remainder, at the end of the year, ſhall be diſtributed by the curate to the poor of the pariſh, or in the neighbourhood, and he ſhall produce receipts from thoſe to whom theſe alms have been given.

But if, by length of time, this hamlet ſhould be diſſolved, the lands purchaſed by madam D'Aſtie, whoſe maiden name was Darby, ſhall be ſold, by order of the archbiſhop, for the time being, and the produce employed in founding charity ſchools in thoſe places, where he ſhall judge them moſt wanting.

Such, my dear mother, is the family at the head of which they mean to place me, notwithſtanding my incapacity. Our hamlet might be conſidered as only one family. May God give his bleſſing to this work; and, if he bleſſes my marriage with many children, may he grant me

one willing to devote himſelf to this work, in order to repair the faults I have committed therein. I think I ſhould have been willing to fix myſelf here all my life, but I muſt only ſtay till things are thoroughly ſettled upon the footing agreed on, after which I ſhall return to my mother-in-law, and we ſhall content ourſelves with viſiting them from time to time.

I acquainted you that the curacy was worth little more than twenty guineas a year, for ſeveral years paſt; it is at preſent worth double that ſum by the increaſe of tithes; thus our curate has found himſelf in a ſituation to educate two young perſons, whom he intends to ſucceed himſelf and his brother. Our archbiſhop having engaged his chapter, on whom this living depends, never to give it to any one who has not been educated to the miniſtry, we are careful at preſent not to ſuffer either prieſts or monks for the following reaſon.

All our young women are very pious and innocent. A good capuchin who preached one Advent in the pariſh, cried up the advantages of celibacy ſo ſtrongly, and of a monaſtic life, that half the pariſh would no more hear of matrimony. Our paſtors have a great reſpect for the

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ſtate extolled by St. Paul, but they are of opinion, that the vocation for a monaſtic life is much rarer than is imagined, and therefore did not encourage this fervor. At the end of ſix months, all theſe vocations diſappeared; for which they returned God thanks: we have great need of good mothers of families, and they are very ſcarce. If we find real vocations we encourage them! For theſe two years there have been only three girls and two lads in whom a real vocation has been obſerved. The boys are brought up to the miniſtry, as I have already told you, and are already in ſacred orders. The girls are put into the hoſpital for the infirm.

I confeſs, my dear mother, I am as paſſionately fond of this project as if it was my own invention; nevertheleſs, I ſhould not have thought of it, if I had not recollected a project put in execution near St. Denis, in France, where a whole village lived as we propoſe to do. The ſuperior of the convent of the viſitation at Rouen, wrote an account of it to my aunt: I was then ſtrongly affected with it; but my extreme youth effaced this pious inſtitution from my mind: I recollect it at preſent, and hope for ſucceſs, unleſs I ſpoil the ſcheme. I am going to turn this year to my advantage by gaining in-

ſtruction, and ſhall afterwards depend on the help of God. The innocence of theſe young couples will excite his bleſſing, and obtain me his divine aſſiſtance.

We yeſterday finiſhed our ceremonies; would to God people behaved in our churches with as much modeſty as theſe poor people in their diverſions; yet they are merry, and divert themſelves heartily. Induſtry gives a reliſh to recreation, I ſee it clearly, and doubt not but my Harriet will experience it at the expence of her vapours: idleneſs and a luxurious way of living, produces, or rather maintains them; for your condition, it is ſaid, may occaſion them. Yet all our peaſants are ignorant of this diſorder. Their pregnancy does not in the leaſt interrupt their labour, and frequently they have but juſt time to return home before they are brought to bed. They are kept within doors as much as poſſible, towards the end of the ninth month; but cuſtom renders repoſe an unnatural ſtate to them.

LETTER XXXVII.

CLARISSA TO LADY HARRIET.

I Give you joy, my dear ſiſter, on the new exiſtence you have acquired with our common mother; I always hoped for this happy change; but, I ſhall aſſure you, with the frankneſs which friendſhip requires, that I did not expect it ſo ſoon. You are right, in ſaying, our two mothers agree together; they go to the ſame ſchool, and muſt therefore, have the ſame theme. The goſpel is their leſſon, Jeſus their maſter. Then, this maſter is he who repeats to us, in a thouſand different ways, Learn of me, that am meek, and lowly of heart. Love me, love your neighbour; behold the law and the prophets. In this conſiſts devotion and ſanctity; every thing which does not conduce hereto is illuſory. I know, my dear friend, that your heart is free from gall; and that, at the moment when your tongue pierces like a pointed arrow, you would be ready to tear yourſelf into pieces, to ſerve this poor neighbour, whom you have juſt afflicted. I have ſometimes ſeen children of a good diſpoſition, and extremely choleric, in the exceſs of their little fury, beat their play-fellows; and, if theſe ſeemed in a humour to return their blows, the little dragon took fire,

and would tear their very eyes out, if he could. Had they, on the contrary, ill treated a meek ſpirited timid child, who had no other means of avenging himſelf than by his tears, the little lion was immediately transformed into a lamb; would kiſs his companion; embrace him; ſhare with him his play-things; and, in a word, would not be eaſy, till he ſaw him conſoled for the blows he had received.

This is exactly the caſe with my dear ſiſter; ſhe is almoſt in a ſtate of deſpair when ſhe has wounded; but her repentance does not cure the wound ſhe has made: if ſhe reflects ſeriouſly, as ſhe has began to do, her good heart will reſolve never to afflict any one. I live here in the center of charity, I aſſure you; and yet I diſcover every day I have need to correct a fault, which makes my inferiors ſuffer. Naturally abſent, I anſwer at theſe moments with a ſevere deciſive tone. Aſk my poor Fanny, how often at firſt ſhe ſuffered from this fault? She has even ſuffered, when ſhe has been convinced, my heart has had no ſhare in this tone; which I have perceived, by her colouring, and ſometimes by her tears. I have even ſhed them myſelf on this occaſion; notwithſtanding, I have brought with me here, this ſevere ſharp manner of ſpeaking.

My

My mother-in-law, whom, I had on my knees begged to acquaint me with my faults, has had the goodneſs to make me ſenſible of it ſeveral times. Her example more than her diſcourſe will correct me, I am ſure. It is impoſſible to be more conſiderate than ſhe is; ſhe has a particular way of ſpeaking for every one, and this way of ſpeaking is always adapted to their neceſſities. Her ſon aſſures me this is not natural to her; ſhe muſt, therefore, have taken infinite pains to acquire this eveneſs of temper, which flies in a paſſion at nothing, and is always ready to excuſe the action from the intention. The woman ſhe has taken to look after the cattle, is almoſt a ſimpleton; for which very reaſon, ſhe preferred her to others who ſought the advantage of being in her ſervice. If this poor creature was ſpoke to roughly, ſays ſhe, ſhe would become quite ſtupid; whilſt, by a little patience, ſhe may be made fit for another ſervice. She has already made ſeveral thorough ſervants; and when they are become ſuch, ſhe parts with them to others. This ſeems a trifle; yet, it is extremely toilſome; her meekneſs can only be compared with that of our paſtors: what difficulties have they encountered to civilize their flocks; I ſay, civilize them, my dear; and I do not ſay too much; I find here a compleat

pleat proof of what I have read ſomewhere, that true politeneſs is inſeparable from a lively charity. Apply yourſelf therefore to render your words like the ſentiments of your heart, and then, my dear ſiſter will be perfect.

I don't wonder at your envying the peaceable and innocent life we here lead; we here ſee beautiful nature in every thing, and ſhe is terribly diſguiſed where you are. I have, nevertheleſs, heard ſay, that there is not a city in the world where ſo many virtuous actions are performed. Since God fixes you there for two years longer, you ſhould endeavour to form a connection with ſome virtuous perſons, whoſe ſociety may be at the ſame time agreeable and uſeful. I recollect, that, in one of the firſt letters you wrote me after your arrival, you extolled greatly thoſe philoſophers without cloaks, who complied with every thing in ſociety. This is laudable to a certain degree. A magiſtrate ought to preſerve connections with his brethren, with his family: I ſay as much of every other ſtation; but, it is not neceſſary he ſhould confine himſelf to this ſociety only; and, it is lawful to conſort with thoſe in whom we find a conformity of taſte and ſentiment; provided, we do not attach ourſelves to them too ſtrongly; for

I think

I think ſingularity always blameable. You have no connections in this country; therefore, may better than another allow yourſelf this ſatisfaction. I think, I am rather ſilly to give you advice; it is like carrying water to a river, and gold to Peru. You are at the ſpring head, and run no riſk in following in this as in every thing elſe, the counſels of our mother. The baron is at work for you, and ſeems to me to have wrote a great deal. Who would have imagined, that at his age he had already experienced ſo many viciſſitudes of fortune!

LETTER XXXVIII.

LADY HARRIET TO CLARISSA.

BEHOLD! here is ſomething to pay you beforehand, for the large packet you have made me expect. Mr. Balfour arrived yeſterday evening, and has brought us the beſt news in the world. I make uſe of your language, my dear ſiſter; for, I can't yet bring myſelf to rejoice, at ſeeing you ſtript, and conſigned to your mountain. Hold, Clariſſa, your project does not pleaſe me at all.

Mrs. DARBY *continues.*

I BEG my ſecond daughter's pardon; but, it is entirely to my taſte. It is certain that in all ages God reſerves ſome choſen ſouls, whom he ſets apart, to make uſe of the expreſſion: behold the origin of monaſteries. The firſt who ſepara ed themſelves from the ſociety of mankind, to live only for God, conceived, that, notwithſtanding their ſeparation from the ſociety of mankind, nothing could diſpenſe them from the duties they owed ſociety. A love of God, which extinguiſhed charity for our fellow creatures, would be illuſory; and a love for our neighbour, may be conſidered as a rule by which we may ſound our love for our Creator. By the

ſtream

ſtream we judge of the abundance of the ſpring. Some, and by much the ſmalleſt number, conſecrated themſelves to prayer; they were Moſes's, who, while their brothers fought in the plain, obtained victory for them, by perpetually lifting up their pure hands to Heaven. The reſt, to this duty of charity, added another; and, while they prayed to God for the grace neceſſary for the wants of the ſoul, employed their hands in labour, to afford them the means of relieving thoſe of the body. Their ſobriety rendered their alms plentiful, and they might be conſidered as doubly uſeful to ſociety. We read that this great number of anchorites, ſcattered over the deſarts of the church, met together in harveſt time, and went in companies to hire themſelves as labourers. Work interrupted not their prayers, prayers hurt not their labour; they received a certain quantity of corn in payment, and ſeveral veſſels might be ſeen in the port of Alexandria, loaded with corn, the fruit of their ſweat, which was diſtributed amongſt the poor. Thoſe who would imitate in Europe, the Anthonians, and monks of the order of St. Hilaire and St. Pacome, never loſt ſight of theſe important points, prayer and labour. We ſee in the rule of St. Benedict, how eſſential he thought this article. Two circumſtances con-

concurred, to make labour of hands neglected. The barbarity of the ages brought on ignorance, and the religious only, devoted themſelves to ſtudy; a work doubtleſs as ſalutary and more painful than corporal labour. The ſeculars, to ſecond the religious and encourage them to ſtudy, ridded them from temporal wants, by bequeathing them conſiderable eſtates. The firſt ardor being abated, they abandoned their ſtudies, and returned not to labour. Parents accuſtomed themſelves to conſider monaſteries as honourable proviſions for their families; and placed their children there, without conſidering whether they had a vocation for this way of life. Many who had an averſion to uſeful employments through lazineſs, thought a religious habit a ſufficient title to exempt them from being uſeful to the ſtate; and this multiplied theſe idle people to ſuch a degree as to prejudice population and agriculture, either by diminiſhing the number of married ſubjects; or by their poſſeſſing the lands which ought to be the property of the ſubjects, and thereby reducing the poor to the neceſſity of a ſtate of celibacy, through fear of increaſing the number of wretches. Hence the outcries againſt religious orders, thoſe odious appellations of idle drones, hornets, dead members, &c. and wiſhes, to ſee theſe religious houſes

houſes diſſolved, which retain nothing of their primitive inſtitution but the name. You have very juſtly remarked, that real vocations for celibacy are very ſcarce. Your pariſh, in twelve years, has had but five inſtances thereof; and, a great number of worthy fathers of families. I dare affirm convents would be reduced to a very ſmall number, if thoſe only were admitted whom God calls to this ſtate. Piety and religion would be no loſers by this dimunition of monks. There would be fewer religious, without there being fewer perſons devoted to God; thoſe that remained would be the ſweet ſavour of chriſtianity; and with the ſuperfluity of the revenue, annexed to theſe monks who have only the habit, I would have the ſame done in all our provinces, which you have done in that where you live. I ſhould like every village to have an hamlet of chriſtian union, where thoſe who were deſirous of practiſing the goſpel literally, might retire: theſe would be true monaſteries uſeful to the ſtate. Theſe people would furniſh an healthy numerous race, for fruitfulneſs and health are the conſequence of labour and a ſober way of life. Their children, by entering into ſociety, would bring there virtues which would change the face of the earth; our country places would become an heaven. A fine dream, my dear child,

child, the divine goodneſs grant it may be realized; it ſeems difficult only at a diſtance, and there wants only one lord of a diſtrict, worthy of being ſo, to realize it among his vaſſals. One of the regulations which pleaſes me beſt, is the leaving the coloniſts at liberty to return to the village. You will find but few who will take the advantage of it; all would have wiſhed for it, had they been forced to continue their reſidence at the hamlet.

But, my dear child, there is one article among your rules to which I will never conſent; and, I think I have ſufficient reaſon. That which ſubjects you to common nouriſhment. God has made different conditions in life, and wills that each ſhould live according to his ſtation. We have received, by ſucceſſion, leſs robuſt bodies than peaſants; and, our employments do not demand greater ſtrength; we have, in our youth, contracted an habit which cannot be deſtroyed, without riſquing our lives. God forbid, I ſhould make myſelf an advocate for luxury and ſuperfluous wants; no my child, I would only preſerve the eſtabliſhed order. If God deſigned you for the ſtate of life, you have yourſelf choſe, he would have manifeſted his will, by abſolutely ſtripping you of every thing;

and then, I ſhould have been the firſt to have encouraged you to walk with joy in the ſtation Providence had placed you in: the contrary has happened; all your fortune is ſecured to you, and it is your duty to act like a perſon who muſt one day re-enter into the ſociety of her equals. If you regard me, your table ſhall be ſeparate; you ſhall ſuffer nothing there which looks like luxury; and, you ſhall alſo not experience any of thoſe denials, which are the conſequence of poverty. Your honeſt people would not be offended at this, were they told, that Providence has beſtowed on you great riches; and, that your way of living, though above theirs, is infinitely below what you are in a condition to follow, if you were not willing to approach their condition. I hope, madam d'Aſtie will not diſapprove of my reflections on this ſubject; I think them juſt. I flatter myſelf alſo ſhe will herſelf relax ſomething of her moderation; you would ſuffer too much to be better treated than her. I reſpect her virtue infinitely; ſhe has ſubmitted to the orders of Heaven in her poverty; ought ſhe not to have the ſame ſubmiſſion, in the change it has permitted her to experience; a change ſhe neither wiſhed, or ſought for?

Mr.

Mr. Baron, it is to you I recommend my daughter; I have conſented chearfully to the gift ſhe has made you of herſelf; but, it was on condition you ſhould take care of our common treaſure; if you leave her to herſelf, we ſhall either loſe her ſoon, or have the unhappineſs to ſee her drag on a languiſhing life, with a broken conſtitution; ſhe is not in the leaſt fit to undergo the fatigues of a Carmelite.

Lady HARRIET *continues.*

AT laſt my turn is come, they have interrupted me only to come into my opinion. Remain in your deſert, according to your new order: but no repaſts like anchorites. My mother intreats, I threaten. Hear me, Mr. Baron; I inſiſt on your word of honour, that my Clariſſa ſhall be treated like a perſon of her condition; I don't deſire you to feed her with ortolans, though they are plenty where you are; but, at leaſt, let her live as perſons of eaſy circumſtances do in town. Charity begins at home, we ſay in Engliſh. This is more than charity, it is but juſtice, and I ſhall cite you as an aſſaſin before the tribunal of the whole univerſe, if you do not make uſe of your authority, to force

force your wife to live in a proper manner. Perſuade, madam, your mother, that her example will be the only means to engage Clariſſa to do ſo; you are rich enough to afford this expence. I am going to be Mr. Balfour's ſecretary; or rather to ſpare him the trouble of dictation, and give you an account of his voyage.

Some days before he left Paris, he conceived the moſt happy prognoſtic of the ſucceſs of his enterprize; towards which, Providence furniſhed him with unexpected helps. We have at Paris no more ſervants than are abſolutely neceſſary; ſo in his firſt voyage, Mr. Balfour was accompanied only by his valet de chambre, and propoſed to take him this journey. By the greateſt good luck in the world, this lad was ſeized with a tertian ague; and, notwithſtanding his earneſt intreaties to go with his maſter, my huſband would not ſuffer him to hazard increaſing his diſtemper. He was alſo as unwilling to deprive me of the only ſervant who ſpoke Engliſh, and being a good deal embarraſſed mentioned it to a countryman and acquaintance, whom he met at the coffee-houſe. I can eaſily do without one of mine, ſays his friend to him; I ſhall ſtay about four months at Paris before I ſet out for Italy; I have hired an Engliſhman,

who knows the three languages, and is abſolutely of no uſe to me while I remain here. If you expect to return in a month, I will lend you him with all my heart: he is a ſenſible fellow, and has had a better education than people of his ſtation generally have; has always lived with perſons of faſhion, and has been ſeveral years in the family of a gentleman of diſtinguiſhed piety and virtue. You will diſoblige me very much, if you make any excuſe about this matter.

It was not natural for my huſband to be curious about the name of the maſter, whom this man had ſerved ſo long. Nevertheleſs, a kind of ſecret impulſe engaged him to aſk it. Judge his ſurpriſe when he heard the name of the dean of Colborn, and diſcovered that the ſervant who was offered him, was the infamous James. He knew his friend well enough to be ſenſible he was incapable of making an ill uſe of the ſecret he was about to impart to him; he therefore frankly owned to him, that one of the principal motives of his journey was to ſecure this wretch who was in his ſervice. He has been guilty of perjury, ſays he, to charge with an horrible crime, two perſons whom I love and reſpect

ſpect infinitely; they have been forced to fly their country, and one of them is now at my houſe, where I cheriſh her as my mother. It is therefore neceſſary to ſecure this villain, and draw from him the neceſſary diſavowals for the juſtification of my friends. I can't mention their names, out of reſpect for their perſecutor; but ..... I gueſs, replied his friend. You certainly mean Mrs. Darby and her daughter. James has entertained me with an account of their flight; but, the raſcal has taken care not to tell me the ſhare he himſelf had in this affair. Acquaint me with it, that I may be in a better condition to ſerve you. Is it poſſible theſe ladies are innocent? My huſband eaſily convinced his friend, and did it with the utmoſt tenderneſs, with reſpect to the father of Clariſſa, by obſerving, that poſſibly Mr. Darby might have been terribly abuſed by a ſervant, in whom he put confidence. The buſineſs was to oblige the calumniator to retract his evidence; and this, which ſeemed mighty eaſy in ſpeculation, to them appeared very difficult in the execution, and the more ſo as Mr. Balfour was abſolutely reſolved to ſpare the reputation of the perſon who had ſet James to work, which excluded the common ways of juſtice. Beſides, he was not certain he could make uſe of them in France,

againſt a perſon who had done nothing contrary to the laws of the kingdom, where he then reſided. It was poſſible to gain him by promiſes, or to intimidate him by menaces; but what weight would the retraction of this wretch be of, if it was not obtained juridically? We might be accuſed of having forged it. My huſband quitted his friend quite undetermined how to act; and, his uneaſineſs prevented his cloſing his eyes the whole night. He met his friend early; the next morning, according to appointment, at a coffee-houſe; for James muſt certainly know his name, and it was of conſequence not to give him the leaſt ſuſpicion. They reſolved to ſend this villain on a meſſage out of town; and to employ the time of his abſence, in ſearching his box for letters from Mr. Darby, that might ſerve to prove their intelligence; which ſcheme was executed. They had looked over almoſt all his cloaths to no purpoſe; when they found a pair of old ſtockings rolled up, which felt ſo weighty as to induce them to unroll them; they contained one hundred and twenty guineas, two rings of value, and your diamond collar. They readily gueſſed he had taken an advantage of the moment of your mother's flight with Montalvo, to commit this robbery; and, that he had accuſed her

of having broke open the cheſt of drawers where theſe jewels were, which had ſome appearance of probability. They thought they had enough to intimidate him; and, Mr. Balfour waited for him with impatience in his friend's cloſet. He did not know my huſband's face; but, trembled when he heard his name, after having taken notice that he locked the door. Then his maſter laying the diamonds on the table, my huſband told him, he claimed them, as the property of miſs Darby, from whom he had an authority to apprehend his ſervant as a thief. The villain at firſt behaved with great effrontery, and ſaid theſe diamonds were given him by Mr. Darby, as a reward for his zeal in the purſuit of his daughter. It is not uſual to make ſuch preſents to a ſervant, replies Mr. Balfour ſternly. Sir, ſays he to his friend, ring for your ſervants, and order them to fetch a commiſſary, and the man we apprehended laſt night, the worthy accomplice of this perjured raſcal, this poiſoner; but he was not concerned in the dean of Colborn's death; and I have promiſed him his life as a reward for the ſincerity, with which he has confeſſed his crimes; this fellow ſhall pay for both. I deſire alſo you would ſend your chaiſe to my houſe for Mrs. Coſby, who has proofs of the dean's being poiſoned, which will prevent

his trial from lasting a great while, and the rack will, doubtless, discover many other things.

James, audacious as he was, was thunderstruck at these words: he fell on his knees, and begged for mercy; and my husband, after having long seemed inexorable, at last pretended to yield with difficulty to the interposition of his friend, who entreated him to be favourable, and not to expose him. This wretch's pardon is in his own hands; let him endeavour to furnish us with means to justify Mrs. and miss Darby from the crimes they have been so disgracefully accused of, and I give my word of honour to let him escape the justice of man; but let him fear falling into the hands of the justice of God, which is infinitely more terrible. A confession of his crimes is the first step towards obtaining the mercy of God.

James promised the utmost sincerity; and to give a proof that he would keep his word, took out of his pocket-book a bill for 1000 pounds, which Mr. Darby had given him on a banker at Rome, on condition of his settling in this capital of Italy. This was something; but my husband was desirous of accumulating means to induce Mr. Darby to do whatever he required

of

of him, therefore propoſed to James to make a confeſſion of all theſe crimes to two eccleſiaſtics, who ſhould draw up a deed thereof, which he ſhould ſign, in preſence of a notary public: he was a long time before he conſented to this; but after many repeated promiſes, that what he did ſhould not at all be made uſe of againſt him, he complied. Two eccleſiaſtics and a notary public were ſent for. James wrote firſt himſelf an exact confeſſion of his crimes in Engliſh; after which the notary ſwore him, and wrote his depoſition in French, under the original. This deed was afterwards ſigned by the eccleſiaſtics, and by Mr. Balfour's friend; my huſband himſelf did not chuſe to ſign his name. I don't know whether ſuch an act would have been valid in law, but it was not intended to be produced in a court of juſtice, and my huſband's deſign was only to frighten Mr. Darby, and bring him into reaſonable terms. They then told the criminal that he ſhould be kept priſoner in this cloſet, and not permitted to go out till your father had publicly repaired your injured reputation. I know my dear ſiſter muſt ſuffer infinitely by being acquainted with the violent ſteps my huſband was obliged to take againſt a perſon to whom ſhe thinks ſhe ſtill owes reſpect, and even loves; and that ſhe would have ſacri-

ficed every thing to ſpare him this pain. I applaud her attachment to her duty as a daughter; but I intreat her to conſider, that her duty towards her mother is as ſacred as the other. She has loſt her reputation; ſhe is baniſhed like a criminal; every thing that is done for her juſtification ought to meet with Clariſſa's approbation: beſides, the greateſt good that can be done her perſecutor, is, to force him to repair his injuſtice. When this firſt ſtep is taken, his converſion will become more eaſy; this firſt proceeding is an act which muſt precede his repentance.

James was almoſt diſtracted when he found his enlargement depended on Mr. Darby; he knew the difficulty of getting him to retract his contrivances; and to oblige him to it, he deſired leave to write to him. This was what Mr. Balfour wanted, ſo he permitted him. I omit this letter, though an original, as I know it would afford you no amuſement. I ſhall only acquaint you, that, when my huſband had got it into his poſſeſſion, he no longer doubted the ſucceſs of his undertaking. I had been very uneaſy about the anxiety I had obſerved him labour under, which he had ineffectually endeavoured to conceal from me, under pretence of a ſlight

a ſlight indiſpoſition; I was not leſs confounded at the prodigious change I remarked in his countenance, when he returned to dinner. He foreſaw the queſtions we ſhould aſk him on this head, and naturally told us his uneaſineſs and joy had aroſe from your affairs, deſired us to ſuſpend our curioſity with regard to this matter, till his return, and that he could now aſſure us, his journey would be ſhort, and attended with all poſſible ſucceſs.

My dear, my dear, ſays I to myſelf, thank the preſence of my mother; you ſhould not eſcape with this declaration, if I was not afraid of the looks ſhe gives me when I commit a folly. Secrets for Harriet, for this dear half of himſelf, as he frequently calls me! He knows her but little, if he flatters himſelf to keep his ſecret till his departure. Doubt not, Clariſſa, but I would get it out of him, were it but to convince him of the authority I have over him; but our mother makes me promiſe not to make any attempt to know it; he will ſet out in poſſeſſion of his ſecret, and I ſhan't deceive you, when I acquaint you *I* am ignorant of the means he intends to employ, to ſucceed in his enterprize

Indeed, the valet de chambre's fever was a favour of the Lord's; I repeat it; it went off after the third fit, exactly at the time he was wanted; ſo that he was able to accompany my huſband. Mr. Darby had left Old Windſor, and they were two days in London before they could find him out. Mr. Balfour having diſcovered that he lodged at a bagnio, went there, attended by his valet de chambre, and two other ſervants. Theſe three attendants ſtayed in the antichamber. Mr. Darby was yet in his night gown when my huſband entered his room, and notwithſtanding his endeavours to aſſume a chearful countenance, it was eaſy to perceive that this viſit was not agreeable to him: he neverthleſs ran to embrace Mr. Balfour. You are a man of your word, ſays he to him; likely you bring my jade of a daughter's reſignation of her fortune in my favour: is ſhe at laſt married? Whom has ſhe married? At the bottom, I ſhould have loved her, if it had not been for the trick ſhe played me in making my ſiſter diſinherit me; but if ſhe chearfully repairs this fault, I will reſtore her my tenderneſs, and would have allowed her ſomething for her maintenance, if the baggage had not already made a proviſion for that. Do you know the mother has carried off all her daughter's jewels, with

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an intention to give them to her, doubtleſs? With this ſum, and what Clariſſa has got from the ſale of her pearls, they muſt have enough to live decently, in ſome corner; and the booby, who has married Clariſſa, has reaſon to be contented with his good fortune; for ſhe informs me he is a mean fellow, perhaps ſome footman. A very fine match for a young lady of quality!

I have ſuffered you to ſay every thing you pleaſed without interrupting you, replied Mr. Balfour; may I expect the ſame favour from you? Firſt, it is not true, that the perſon whom Clariſſa has married is a mean fellow; ſhe was determined to have even married beneath herſelf, if ſhe could have found no other match, to have had it in her power the ſooner to regain your heart by the ceſſion of———

Oh! I have no further occaſion for her conſent, for the greateſt part of her fortune, ſays Mr. Darby, interrupting him; the law has put me in poſſeſſion already of her eſtate in Ireland. The buſineſs at preſent is only about her money in the funds, and two old houſes, which I don't much care about; and if you had come a fortnight later, you would not have met with me, for I propoſe taking a journey to Ireland, and I

have a project thereon to communicate to you. You are the friend of my daughter and wife; I have known the time you were mine; would it not be a masterpiece of friendship, to settle every thing that is past, to the content of all parties? This is the motive of my journey, replied my husband. Explain your views, and be assured, that your wife and daughter will agree to every thing you can propose, consistent with honour and religion.

Stuff! Mr. Balfour, honour and religion are fine words, which every one makes use of, and explains after his own way; I have honour and religion, I myself; it is true, mine don't in the least resemble what my females call by this name, and perhaps is worth more; but this is not the point in question. Apropos, you likely may know where she is?

At my house, Sir, replied my husband. Your virtuous daughter is gone with her husband, the baron d'Astie, to his mother's, by whom she is adored; and to make you easy at once about the fate of all who might interest you, I shall acquaint you, that Mrs. Cosby died, expressing the utmost detestation for her ill conduct, at my house, of a malignant fever, which carried her

her off in ſeven days, but left her time ſufficient to diſcharge her conſcience. She thought it her duty to make certain depoſitions, the contents whereof I am ignorant of, which are in the hands of your wife; ſhe caught this diſtemper by attending Mrs. Darby, who was in the utmoſt danger from the ſame fever. Montalvo, after having cloſed his mother's eyes, retired to the Chartreux, where he inceſſantly implores God to turn your heart.

He has a great deal of goodneſs left, replied Mr. Darby. To do well, my wife ſhould die; her prayers in Heaven would have been more efficacious. Alas! my friend, you know there never was an union leſs properly ſuited, than mine with this bigot; ſhe told me once, I made her life a purgatory to her; and I can ſay, ſhe has made mine an hell to me; ſhe can, if ſhe pleaſes, ſet us both at liberty; let her conſent to a divorce, I'll ſoon find out means to obtain it from the eccleſiaſtical court. I have a mind to marry again. My daughter ſhall renounce her whole fortune, and I'll generouſly allow her a few thouſands to live like a baroneſs.

Mr. Balfour could ſcarce contain himſelf at this diſcourſe; however, being deſirous to ſound this

this myſtery of iniquity, he repreſſed his indignation, and aſked Mr. Darby how he would act, to procure a divorce. Nothing more eaſy, replied Mr. Darby. A circumſtance muſt firſt be allowed, which can be diſputed by fools only, that a prudent woman is a phenix, which ought to be ranged among imaginary beings. This granted, I ought not to think myſelf privileged beyond other huſbands. My wife has juſt given a proof of the licentiouſneſs of her conduct, by running away with a booby. I ſhall give this action its full weight, and by the aſſiſtance of a little money, ſhall by this means obtain a diſſolution of our marriage, a divorce in proper form. I ſhall then have it in my power to marry again; and my wife, quit of an huſband ſhe hates, will no longer be under a neceſſity to have recourſe to poiſon to———Stop, Sir, ſays Mr. Balfour, whoſe patience was quite exhauſted; you will no more have the ſame helps to calumniate the pureſt virtue, as you have heretofore had; your accomplices are——but read James's letter. At the ſame time he threw it on the table. Mr. Darby ſeemed quite thunderſtruck; and, after having read the letter, curſed the traitor a thouſand times, and ſaid, he would find means to make him repent his impertinent epiſtle. Believe me, Mr. Darby,

ſays

ſays my huſband, the beſt thing you can do on this occaſion, is, to lend your helping hand to the efforts I ſhall make to accommodate this affair. Here is a copy of a deed paſſed in a judicial manner, which would throw you into the utmoſt embarraſſment, if it was made public. The remains of friendſhip, and the regard I have for your wife and virtuous daughter, induced me to endeavour to get into my poſſeſſion a writing which might ruin you. Profit by my good will, and be aſſured, that, without the poſitive orders of the baroneſs d'Aſtie, you would not have come off at ſo cheap a rate. As ſoon as he had done ſpeaking, he ſhewed him the deed that had been obtained from James, which permitted him to utter only ſome broken expreſſions, that ſeemed to indicate a ſort of repentance. He concluded, by aſking Mr. Balfour if he knew any method of eſcaping the precipice on which he ſtood.

I have told you, replied Mr. Balfour, I have found means to get into my poſſeſſion the original of this deed; I can cancel it, but it is on theſe conditions. Firſt, the act muſt be annulled, which has put you in poſſeſſion of your daughter's eſtate in Ireland: you muſt make a deed of ſale of it to me, and I will conſent to leave

leave you the income thereof, during your life, on condition it ſhall revert to your grandchildren after your death. Nothing could oblige your virtuous daughter to give up the remainder of her fortune in England, and in the bank of Genoa; nevertheleſs, ſhe is empowered by her huſband to leave you the income thereof during life, ſo earneſt is her deſire to regain your heart. As to the condition I added to this ceſſion in my preceding journey, it is now a matter of indifference to me; I have in my poſſeſſion ſufficient to oblige you to drop the proſecution you have commenced againſt theſe two innocent perſons: I would fain think, that this villain, James, accuſes you of having ſuborned him to be guilty of perjuring, with a view of excuſing himſelf; yet as he has a bill of yours for 1000l. this might give credit to the calumny. If you would be ruled by me, you would join in all the neceſſary proceedings to perſuade the public, that it is to you, your wife and daughter owe their juſtification. Go with me before a judge, and declare you have been impoſed on by a raſcal, who, through remorſe, has confeſſed his calumny and perjury: James ſhall write you in conſequence a letter, that you ſhall make public in the daily papers, and all the periodical works, and I will undertake to publiſh it

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in France, and wherever elſe the calumny has tranſpired. If you conſent to this, I will ſuppreſs the firſt letter, and you ſhall not be in the leaſt accuſed in the other: if you refuſe to follow my advice, I ſhall be under the diſagreeable neceſſity of printing the firſt letter. You muſt be ſenſible, it muſt give me the utmoſt concern, to be the means of bringing diſgrace on an old friend, ſo nearly related to ladies, for whom I have the greateſt regard.

Mr. Balfour, you put me to a nonplus: are you not afraid?....No, Sir, I fear nothing; I brought three perſons with me, who wait in the antichamber, and on the firſt word will call a conſtable to conduct us both before a magiſtrate. I would ſave you; don't through obſtinacy ruin yourſelf. I act with ſuch ſincerity on this occaſion, that you may immediately ſecure the income of Clariſſa's whole fortune to yourſelf, by the ſame deed which ſecures her eſtate in Ireland to her children after your death. Send for your council. We won't talk about the reparation of honour, till your intereſts are properly ſecured.

It was very likely that Mr. Darby was afraid my huſband would break his word, after having got

got from him what he wanted; for he had hardly propoſed the execution of theſe deeds, before he ſaid, I begin to think you mean fairly, Mr. Balfour: let us begin with the writings, and directly rung the bell, and ordered one of his ſervants to fetch Mr. B—, who did his buſineſs immediately.

My heedleſſneſs made me forget to tell you, that my huſband was furniſhed with this ſecond letter, which he promiſed to make James write. Now, ſays he to Mr. Darby, that you put confidence in my word, I will ſhew you the piece that will ſerve to juſtify you to the public. You will perceive thereby how dear your intereſts are to me.

LETTER *from* JAMES *to Mr.* DARBY.

SIR,

A WRETCH tortured by remorſe, on his knees, conjures you, to aſſiſt him in repairing his crimes. At the inſtigation of a perſon, whoſe name is of no conſequence, I have ſlandered two ladies, in whom I ever obſerved the pureſt virtue. It is a falſhood that Mrs. and miſs Darby ever ſolicited me to attempt your life, as I have wickedly

wickedly aſſerted: the poiſon which I produced before the magiſtrate, was given me by a cruel enemy of theſe ladies. For my reward I was to have one thouſand pounds; I renounce this curſed ſum, and humbly beg your pardon for having inſtigated you to perſecute perſons ſo dear to you. I entreat you would make this reparation public. I am preparing to go to the new world; but will not leave Europe, till I behold my recantation made as public as my calumny has been.

JAMES.

You are a devil of a man, Mr. Balfour, and you have found the way to catch me like a rat in a trap. Behold the fine exclamation which Mr. Darby uttered, who, nevertheleſs, got himſelf out of this hobble like a man of ſpirit. The moment he ſaw the counſellor he had ſent for, he run to him with open arms. Wiſh me joy, my dear friend, ſays he, this is the happieſt day I have ever ſeen; it hath diſcovered the innocence of the perſons who are moſt dear to me in the world. Read this letter, which Mr. Balfour has been kind enough to bring me: it is a ſervice I ſhall never forget; this is true friendſhip indeed!

Indeed,

Indeed, Sir, ſays the counſellor, this James was a great raſcal! It is pity he has not declared the name of the perſon who ſet him on; I ſhould take a great pleaſure in ſeeing ſuch a villain hanged. Could not you perſuade him to confeſs who it was? No, Sir, replied my huſband; I made ſeveral vain attempts; and at laſt I muſt own I was ſatisfied with the reaſons he gave for concealing his abettor: let us think only of returning thanks to God for this happy diſcovery; and do you lend us your aſſiſtance, to ſeal the reconciliation of a family, whom this raſcal had ſet at variance. Miſs Darby, at preſent the baroneſs D'Aſtie, is married very advantageouſly; and as ſhe thereby poſſeſſes a ſufficient fortune to maintain her honourably, according to her rank, ſhe is empowered by her huſband, the baron D'Aſtie, and by his mother, who is his guardian, to make over the produce of her whole fortune to Mr. Darby's uſe, during his life; who, in return for his daughter's kindneſs, conſents to execute a deed of ſale and gift of his eſtate in Ireland to me in truſt, for the uſe of his ſaid daughter and her lawful heirs for ever, reſerving to himſelf the income thereof during his own life. Nothing can be more generous on the ſide of the daughter, or more juſt on the father's, replied the counſellor. It is neceſſary,

gentlemen,

gentlemen, to put in my hands the whole title deeds of madam D'Aſtie and her aunt, and I will finiſh the writings in two days. All my daughter's title deeds are in her houſe at Old Windſor, ſays Mr. Darby; as to the will, we muſt procure a copy of it from Mr. ——, the notary public, but this will take up two or three days at leaſt. I will undertake to get a copy of the will, ſays my huſband; while Mr. Darby puts the title deeds in order. Oh, my dear friend, replies your father, I am quite ignorant about buſineſs, and ſhall want your judgment to unravel this chaos of papers. Will you undertake it, in concert with Mr. ——, while I procure a copy of the will? My huſband had his reaſons for wanting to ſee the original of this will; but he alſo had as ſtrong, to go to your houſe; ſo he accepted this laſt propoſal, and agreed to ſet out after dining at his inn, along with Mr. Darby and the other gentleman. Mr. Darby conducted them to Windſor, and left them there to continue his route. My huſband had not forgot the deſcription which Mrs. Darby had given him of the bureau, where ſhe had depoſited the eight or nine thouſand pounds which you had entruſted to her care; and while the counſellor was buſied about the writings, attempted to open the private drawer of this bureau,

bureau; which, by good luck was in the chamber where he was to lie. Notwithſtanding the inſtructions of your mother, it was a long while before he could ſucceed. He found the ſum the ſame as you mentioned, and took care to depoſit it in a place of ſafety. Add to this ſum, my dear Clariſſa, the value of your diamonds, which have been got out of James's hands, and what you and your mamma already have, and you will find you have almoſt ſeven hundred pounds per annum. But this is not all, Mr. Balfour could not digeſt the loſs of your jewels which were hid in the chaiſe, and was abſolutely determined to recover them. He advertiſed therefore, a reward of one hundred guineas, for the man who drove two perſons, who were particularly deſcribed, to ——, as a recompenſe for the loſs of his time, and the uneaſineſs their flight might have given him. There was room to fear this man's ſuſpecting ſome deſign; therefore, every thing that could be thought of was added to this advertiſement, in order to encourage him. This hackney man, who was ſuppoſed to live ſomewhere in the north of England, dwelt at London, and ſent the next morning one of his ſervants to enquire about the affair, to the coffee-houſe, that had been mentioned in the advertiſement.

The maſter of this coffee-houſe, who had lived with Mr. Balfour twenty years, aſſured the hackney man's ſervant, that he had nothing to fear from his old maſter, who was one of the worthieſt men in the kingdom; and, as the counſellor had put James's recantation into all the newspapers the ſame day, he related the whole affair to the maſter, who came himſelf, as ſoon as he received his ſervant's anſwer. The maſter of the coffee-houſe did not wait for this ſecond viſit, but immediately ſent an expreſs to Mr. Balfour, the moment he knew the coachman lived at London. Though Mr. Darby was expected that very day, my huſband did not think it right to delay this affair; and, having promiſed the counſellor to return the next day before dinner, took poſt, and arrived at the coffee-houſe a few minutes after the hackney man was gone. This man had refuſed to tell his name and place of abode; but he had been dogged; and, Mr. Balfour went to his houſe immediately, without giving himſelf time to pull off his boots. He was not yet returned; and, his wife ſeemed frightned, when ſhe knew that the perſon who was with her was the author of the advertiſement, and a member of parliament. Mr. Balfour ſoon removed her fears, by telling her that you were ſo well pleaſed with her huſband's behaviour on the

the road, that you was desirous of making him a recompense. Indeed, Sir, says this woman, it would have been cruel to have behaved ill to so charming and affable a young lady. My husband knew well enough there was something strange in her journey; she seemed to him to be afraid of being seen; but, it is not his business to intermeddle with the affairs of people who employ him; he is well payed for what he does; and, at the inns they behaved like gentlefolks; that was all that concerned him. Has she acquainted you Sir, that she left a parcel behind her? I have taken great care of it, with an intention to return it, if she claimed it upon paying the chaise hire; for I am not a woman who makes use of things which don't belong to me; every body knows, thank God, that I am an honest person. You may keep the parcel, says Mr. Balfour, I make you a present of it, besides the hundred guineas I promised your husband. But tell me, good woman, has your husband drove any body hereabouts? Yes, Sir, he has drove in this very chaise a citizen and his daughter, who went to see one of her aunts. Apropos, about this chaise, says Mr. Balfour, the young lady assured me, there was not an easier carriage in England; and, that your husband has also excellent horses; I pur-

purpoſe hiring it, during my ſtay here; and, if your huſband has a mind to ſell it, I'll buy it with all my heart, when I return to France: the young lady will be delighted to have the carriage which has done her ſo much ſervice in aſſiſting her to eſcape. I am perſuaded, ſays the woman, my huſband will do every thing in his power to oblige you, Sir; but, here he comes. As ſoon as he entered the room, my huſband threw an hundred pound bank bill on the table, and ſaid, here is the reward I promiſed the perſon who ſaved miſs Clariſſa; give me in a few words an account of your journey. Look ye, Sir, ſays the hackney man, I have been told, you are a very honeſt gentleman; and, that you don't ſeek to over-reach me. I know neither of the perſons I drove, I can eaſily prove it; for the reſt, they ſeemed to me gentlefolks, only they did not pay me; but that was not their fault. I opened the bundle that was left behind the chaiſe, and took an account of its contents, in preſence of the landlord, his wife, and ſervants, who ſigned their names to the paper; I am ready to deliver it up; and I don't think I am any more to blame for having kept it, than I am for having let my chaiſe. One is not obliged, I ſuppoſe, to aſk thoſe one drives, who they are, and why they travel? Certainly, replied Mr.

Balfour, you are not to blame. As to the bundle, I have given it to your wife, and the bank note is yours: and, while I have occaſion for one of your buſineſs in England, I will employ you, depend upon it; I like obliging people, and, you have been very much ſo to the young lady, who will never forget it. Thank God, ſays the hackney man, nobody has ever yet had reaſon to complain of me; I always endeavour to give ſatisfaction to gentlefolks, by whom I get my living. James, ſays his wife to him, the young lady would like to buy the chaiſe, to put her in mind of her adventure; I am certain you won't refuſe her this ſatisfaction. No, nor any thing elſe that was in my power, ſays her huſband. You are an honeſt fellow, replies Mr. Balfour, ſend it to my inn, and fix your price; to-morrow you, or one of your men, ſhall drive me to Windſor; and, if it proves as eaſy a carriage as Miſs Darby ſays, I'll buy it.

The hackney man locked up the bank note in his bureau; and deſired Mr. Balfour to go with him to the place where he kept his carriages, and ſhowed him the poſt chaiſe you had rode in. Mr. Balfour, under pretence of examining it, got in, to feel whether it was well ſtuffed, and at firſt diſcovered nothing. As a blind to

get

get rid of the man, Mr. Balfour had laid his ſnuff-box on the chimney-piece, behind a tea cup; when he was in the chaiſe, he pretended to want a pinch of ſnuff; and, having fumbled in all his pockets, ſays to him, I have left my ſnuff box at your houſe; I would not loſe it for the world, though it is not of any great value; be kind enough to ſtep and look for it. If it is in my houſe, replied the hackney man, it is as ſafe as in your own pocket; and immediately went home to ſearch for it. Mr. Balfour having felt every where in vain, loſt all patience, and with his knife cut the lining of the chaiſe into pieces. Indeed your treaſure was ſafe; for it was impoſſible to diſcover it by feeling. He had ſcarcely found it and put it into his pocket, before the man returned, and ſeemed greatly ſuprized at what had been done in his abſence. I doubted, ſays Mr. Balfour, this chaiſe was badly ſtuffed; and, as I did not like the yellow lining, I cut it to look in the inſide. Here are ſix guineas for you; let it be better ſtuffed with hair, and let a red lining be put in; and in two or three days, I'll look at it again. He then went away, immediately took poſt, and arrived at Old Windſor in the evening; where he found Mr. Darby but juſt diſmounted. The next morning, the deeds were executed, according to

agreement; and, Mr. Darby was ſo well pleaſed with the turn the affair had taken, that he generouſly offered to ſend you all your cloaths and linnen, as well as thoſe of your mother; which was accepted.

My huſband had determined to go to the notary, with whom the original of your aunt's will had been depoſited; and did not defer putting this ſtep into execution, as ſoon as your affairs were entirely ſettled. He had a long while entertained ſuſpicions, which he was deſirous of clearing up. In the firſt mention you made to us of your aunt's will, you were not at liberty to diſpoſe of your eſtate, even by marriage. You had acquainted us, that the perſon who copied it had made a miſtake: the omiſſion of an article of of ſuch conſequence, did not ſeem natural; and he imagined there was ſome ſecret at the bottom which it might be of conſequence to diſcover. He went to the notary's, and told him ſternly, that the will which made you heireſs was forged, that he had certain proof of it; and that he was going to aſſemble the perſons who were preſent at the firſt reading this important deed, whoſe teſtimonies would be evidence againſt him. My huſband found he had not gueſſed wrong, by the terror of the notary; and continuing to talk

like

like a perſon who went on ſure grounds in what he did, ſoon ſaw the notary at his feet, conjuring him to pity his family, and not be his ruin. He was ſurprized at ſuch a ready confeſſion of guilt; becauſe he was ignorant that Mr. Darby had acquainted this perſon, that the principal author of the forgery was in cuſtody; and he at firſt thought my huſband knew more of the affair than he really did. Some words of imprecation againſt the traitor, informed him of the motives of the notary's conduct, who offered to do every thing in his power to repair his fault. This was not poſſible, the original will was burnt; and to endeavour to reſtore it would have made a noiſe; and this did not ſuit Mr. Balfour's intentions. He therefore contented himſelf with making this wretch refund five thouſand pounds, which he had received as the reward of his crime; and obtaining from him an acknowledgment in writing of his guilt. What uſe did my huſband intend to make of this writing? To remove the timid Clariſſa's ſcruples about what has been done. Certainly the perſon who receives a gift, ought to ſubmit to the conditions the giver impoſes. Then the intention of your virtuous aunt was, that her eſtate ſhould never go out of the hands of you and your children; but to be employed in the inſtruction and relief

of the poor: you were therefore obliged in conſcience to force your father to give up your eſtate, and there was no other way to procure his conſent, except that which my huſband has taken: ſo my dear you ought not to be diſpleaſed with what he has done; on the contrary, in my opinion, he has managed this affair with the utmoſt diſcretion.

My Clariſſa is then rich in ſpite of herſelf; rich through Providence with all the merit of the poverty to which ſhe has ſubmitted ſo chearfully; for we have reckoned you poſſeſs above eleven hundred pounds per annum; free to follow the impulſes of her generous and charitable heart, without encroaching on her own real wants. We ſhall frequently reſume this ſubject, my dear friend, for it gives us great concern; and we ſhall not be eaſy in this reſpect, till we have a poſitive promiſe from Madam d'Aſtie, your huſband, and even your worthy paſtors. I flatter myſelf, my dear, you will yield to our united entreaties. We ſhall expect your ſolemn promiſe with the greateſt impatience; and if you refuſe it, notwithſtanding my condition, I will come myſelf in perſon, and inſiſt on it.

LETTER XXXIX.

Baroneſs D'ASTIE's anſwer to Mrs. DARBY and Lady HARRIET.

I Hope, ladies, you won't imagine it owing to your requeſts, that I ſhall take all poſſible precautions to preſerve the precious treaſure, which divine Providence has entruſted me with. My tenderneſs for her would have made it my duty. Aſk me ſomething leſs natural and more difficult, if you are deſirous to have a proof of my ſincere deſire to oblige two perſons whom I infinitely reſpect. If I had the honour to be known to you, I ſhould think I had a right to be offended at your ſuſpicions; yet, I acknowledge they were not without grounds; and, to confeſs the truth, I ſhould have been very ſorry if you had not entertained them. I muſt explain to you this enigma, and the humiliation of our poor child.

When ſhe propoſed to us the hamlet of chriſtian union, I own I was charmed with it, and deſired her to draw up the plan. I did not expect ſhe would have placed herſelf at the head of this undertaking, and ſtill leſs that ſhe would have propoſed to ſubmit to the common way of life of

the inhabitants of the hamlet. I thought a joke would get me out of this ſcrape with her. My dear Clariſſa, ſays I, I have ſeen ſome diſtricts in France, where the women follow the plough; could we not introduce this cuſtom: it would infallibly be eſtabliſhed; for, like a good legiſlator, you would ſet an example of the performance of your law. Nothing, in my opinion, would be more affecting, than to ſee you travelling three or four and twenty miles a day, a driving of oxen. The irony was too ſtrongly marked not to be underſtood; our child at firſt laughed heartily, and afterwards told me the thing perhaps was not ſo ridiculous as it ſeemed at firſt; that in ſeveral parts of America, the men had no other employment than hunting; and left to the women the care of agriculture as well as of the family. Our delicacy of conſtitution ariſes from our bad education. If from infancy we were accuſtomed to laborious employments, we might expect to become as vigorous as peaſants. Should we become thereby more proper to fulfill the duties which God has immediately impoſed on us? ſays I. It is the ſame with country employments as with an army: a great number of hands are continually wanting; but they alone are not enough, an head is wanting; if all would be heads or hands, the buſineſs could not

not go on; or would always go wrong. God points out to each the place he ſhould occupy, by the ſtation in which he is born, or that whereto his Providence has conducted him. In your firſt condition, your vocation was to educate your children well, to edify your family, to ſhed your benefits on poor artizans, and to aſſiſt your vaſſals in the country. In your ſecond vocation, your firſt duties are the ſame, with the addition of ſome others. God has tranſplanted you with his own hand, to uſe the expreſſion, into the midſt of the country, and has ſeemed to remove you from the ſociety of your equals; this was to conſecrate you for the edification and inſtruction of our poor people, to partake the bleſſings and misfortunes which are annexed to their condition. Theſe bleſſings are ſimplicity, innocence, and peace. The evils (which I call ſo only in conformity to cuſtom,) are a hard life, an abridgment of the conveniencies of life, which are the portion of the rich, and which they may lawfully make uſe of to a certain degree, without being blameable. You ought, doubtleſs, to follow a leſs indulgent way of living than you would do at court. Such a life as moderate courtiers lead there, would be a ſort of inſult to the poor, among whom you live; but, it would be contrary to the order of Pro-

vidence, to live as peaſants do; God does not require this abridgment of you; and he has not been pleaſed to give you the third vocation, which he has granted me twelve years ago. He called me to follow ſtrictly a peaſant's life, ſince he permitted me to be almoſt entirely ſtript of my fortune; I regarded this deprivation of fortune as an abſolute order, and I chearfully ſubmitted to it, becauſe it was his holy will. I thought, without heſitation, that this kind of life was beſt for me, ſince he had been pleaſed to reduce me thereto. He at preſent affords me the means of living a little more plentifully; I ſhall take the advantage of it as far as I can, without prejudicing my conſtitution. For ſeveral years I have been accuſtomed to a very poor diet, and hard labour: perhaps, too great a change might diſorder the good ſtate of health I enjoy at preſent. This, madam, is what I repreſented to our child, without being able to convince her; ſhe perſuades herſelf a way of life like mine would ſtrengthen her conſtitution, without conſidering that ſhe is very delicate, and I never was ſo; ſhe has been brought up in cotton, to uſe the expreſſion, and I was educated in a much leſs tender manner. Yet, as ſhe is very docile, ſhe has ſubmitted to the proviſional regulation I have ſettled. I have fixed

table at three diſhes; two of which, at noon, are to be butcher's meat, and the other is to conſiſt of garden ſtuff. At ſupper, a diſh of roaſt meat, another of poultry, and a third of whatever ſhe chuſes; with white bread, and the beſt wine of the country, at the leaſt three years old. I ſuffer her to dreſs as ſhe likes; a plain dreſs keeps out the cold and heat, as well as one embroidered with gold; but, I will have her well lodged of a night, though within curtains of linnen in ſummer, and of warm common ſtuff in winter, and ſhe ſhall ſleep eight hours; this is a neceſſary regimen at her age: ſhe likes to riſe early in the morning, therefore muſt go to bed the ſooner. For the deciſion of the reſt, I have allowed her to inform you of her projects; and, I have foretold her you will diſlike them; and will have a very bad opinion of me and her huſband. Your letters, which have made me triumph, have rendered her very modeſt, and ſhe promiſes obedience. She will go to the hamlet half the year; I ſhall accompany her in the ſummer to watch over her; in the winter ſhe returns to the village; this is the reſult of our determination.

Perhaps the increaſe of her fortune will induce you ladies to think it neceſſary to add ſomething

more to what has been determined upon. I ſhall ſubmit my judgment to yours; though, to confeſs my weakneſs, it will coſt me ſomething. According to my ſmall underſtanding, every thing ought to be allowed that is conſiſtent with health; this, in my opinion is already done; and a table more plentiful than ours is to be, is a magazine of indigeſtion and infirmities for old age. If God ſends us grand children, they muſt either be initiated to a luxurious way of living, which furniſhes practice for the phyſicians and apothecaries; or be tantalized, by continually ſeeing diſhes before them, proper to excite gluttony, without being ſuffered to taſte them. Beſides, the victuals which were left at our table in ragouts would be abſolutely loſt; I ſhould make a ſcruple of poiſoning our ſervants and the ſick. Now I mention ſervants, we ſhall have but few, in order to be well ſerved. A cook who, but little buſied in the kitchen, will have time to keep the houſe clean; a girl, whom we ſhall decorate with the title of chambermaid, who, after attending on my daughter-in-law, will have the care of the family linnen; a lad, who in the morning is valet de chambre to my ſon, won't be above acting as gardener the reſt of the day; and a dairy maid—very few for a lady of her fortune; but, ſhe will have, in lieu of the pageantry of a numerous

numerous retinue, the ſweet conſolation of reflecting, that ſhe does not rob the ſtate of men who owe to it their labour; that ſhe will not have to anſwer before God, for the vices of a number of lazy people, who might have worked their ſalvation, by tilling the earth; and who damn themſelves in her ſervice, through idleneſs, the mother of all vice.

I repeat it, ladies, I ſubmit mine to your better judgment; give your orders; my heart tells me I ſhall not be contradicted; and this opinion has its ſource, in the high opinion I entertain of your chriſtianity and good ſenſe.

I am, &c.

LETTER XL.

From Clariſſa to Mrs. Darby and Lady Harriet.

I Muſt ſay amen to what has been decided, ſince I find nobody elſe of my opinion. Adieu the fine ſchemes of poor Clariſſa; this is owing to the large fortune, which Mr. Balfour has taken ſo much pains to procure me. I am ſenſible what I owe to his generous cares. He is one of thoſe friends who would gladly force people to be guilty of ingratitude, through the impoſſibility of requiting their benefits; yet, I ſhall not embrace this reſolution; I like to be under an obligation to a friend, and think, I cannot give him a more certain proof of the truth of my attachment. To oblige, to beſtow, to ſerve, is commonly thought the moſt excellent, commodious, and eaſieſt part in friendſhip: I conceive this may be the caſe, when the matter concerns perſons with whom we have connections in ſociety. We are often miſtaken in this article. We talk only of friendſhip, and no name is oftener proſtituted; it is given to all ſorts of unions; and, among a thouſand, ſcarcely one real friendſhip is found. Some time or other, I will ſhow you a compleat diſſertation on every thing that is in our hearts; and this will

will be a picture, or rather an original of perfect friendſhip. And why defer doing it, ſay my ſecond mother and my huſband? They would perſuade me, that nothing which has been hitherto wrote on the ſubject of friendſhip, has given them ſatisfaction; and have a mind to ſee whether I ſhall ſucceed better in what I ſay on this excellent virtue; which is, perhaps, the only real bleſſing that poor mortals can enjoy in this valley of tears. If to be thoroughly ſenſible of it, was ſufficient to write well on this ſubject, alas! I could do wonders; but, ſentiment is widely different from expreſſion. However it does not ſignify, I am reſolved to obey; and, if I am miſtaken, I only riſk being ſet right. I wrote ſome years ago on this ſubject to a lady of diſtinguiſhed merit; and, my letter, by ſome accident or other, fell into the hands of an author, who inſerted it in a magazine; I don't know whether you have read it in this work; but, I am certain it has never been yet publiſhed in France; and that you cannot procure it here. I therefore ſhall endeavour to recollect it.

LETTER *from* Clariſſa *to the Marchioneſs of* C—

MADAM,

YOU requeſt me to write on friendſhip. Never, perhaps, has any thing been more talked of; and, according to all appearance, been leſs underſtood. To treat this ſubject properly, I ought to have a pen as delicate as yours; but, when you command, I cannot refuſe; and, the deſire of convincing you of my obedience, makes me forget the indifference of my talents.

You diſtinguiſh, madam, three periods in friendſhip; its beginning, heighth, and decline. You deſire precepts for this third period; they are uſeleſs, in your opinion, in the two firſt; ſentiment is then a ſure guide. May I preſume to inform you, madam, that I entirely differ from you in this article? I think, firſt, that ſentiment ſhould have no concern in the beginning of friendſhip. Secondly, that friendſhip has no decline if real.

To this you will object your own experience; you have loved certain perſons very much, at preſent you like them leſs: you hence infer, that this third period of friendſhip too often exiſts;

iſts; but from this very circumſtance I conclude, that, with an heart formed to inſpire and feel the moſt tender and laſting friendſhip, you have never yet known a real one.

Every age has its peculiar ſentiments. Youth is the ſeaſon of connexions, but not of friendſhip. But you will ſay, at what time of life then do you place the reign of this delicious ſentiment? No certain rules can be given on this head. I am going to advance a propoſition, which, at firſt ſeems a paradox. The more fit the heart is for friendſhip, the later it taſtes its ſweets. Suſpend your judgment, madam, and do not condemn me, before you underſtand what I mean.

By a heart formed for friendſhip, I mean a tender, honeſt and conſtant heart. Theſe qualities, in youth, are obſtacles, and hindrances to friendſhip. Such an heart has a vivacity which ſpoils all: its noiſe impoſes ſilence on the mind: it would appear on the ſtage, before the proper time, to perform its part; and this puts the whole piece into confuſion. This tender, and altogether honeſt heart, is incapable of ſuſpecting in others the defects it has not itſelf; and may be eaſily beguiled, and made to miſtake tinſel

tinſel for ſolid gold: it beſtows itſelf on ſuppoſitions which cannot laſt. At length the curtain riſes, it finds itſelf deſpiſed by the object of its attachment, and ſuffers infinitely to diſengage itſelf, its conſtancy becomes its puniſhment. It is vexed to find that this phantom of friendſhip ſometimes ſurvives eſteem. This is what you call the decline of friendſhip, without reflecting that a decline muſt ſuppoſe a beginning. You have, nevertheleſs, felt ſomething, was it friendſhip? No. It was a ſentiment, which, without being love, had all its faults. This ſentiment, which is a real paſſion, is a rock, which an heart formed for friendſhip, ſeldom eſcapes at a certain age.

A young perſon, who poſſeſſes a ſolid reaſon, and an heart ſuch as I have deſcribed, finds himſelf in a painful ſituation. The ſecond qualification renders him too ſubject to love, the firſt ſhews him the danger and trouble of ſuch an engagement. He would avoid this inconvenience, but what can be done with this tender heart, and its vaſt abundance of ſentiment? He muſt find means to rid himſelf of this inſupportable burthen. Friendſhip ſeems a reſource. We think it proper to appeaſe this thirſt of loving which devours, we madly give ourſelves up to it, and, to its profit,

diſpoſe

diſpoſe of all thoſe riches of ſentiment with which our hearts abound. In this ſtate, if a ſerious examination of the object, with which we are deſirous to cloſe the tye of friendſhip is propoſed; our anſwer is, there is no time to do it, we are in too much hurry. But after this firſt immoderate deſire is appeaſed, after theſe exceſſive riches of ſentiment are diſſipated, the heart, to uſe the expreſſion, weakened by its exceſſes, permits the underſtanding to intermeddle in its affairs. Experience will have corrected the fault of judging others by ourſelves; and we are convinced that the heart is blind, and incapable of making a proper choice. It will therefore be reduced to a perfect neutrality, while reaſon will be employed in a long and ſevere examination of the perſon, whom we are willing to raiſe to the quality of a friend.

Beſides, in youth, the heart is of a delicacy, and in an infantile ſtate, which does not render it worthy of knowing friendſhip. It pouts at the leaſt fault; it would be flattered, careſſed and courted. Real friendſhip is too ſerious for it, and if viewed in its true light, would inſpire it with a reſpect, ſomething like terror. It ſhould be left at liberty to enjoy itſelf according to its fancy, till become more firm and ſolid, it has

ſtrength

ſtrength to wean itſelf from ſentiment, which are only delightful, and to ſubſtitute in their room, thoſe that are more durable.

Alas! you will ſay, under what a form do you repreſent friendſhip? Where are its charms and delights? You repreſent it ſo ſerious, that I could almoſt fancy it crabbed and diſguſting. Recollect, madam, friendſhip, without ſoftneſs is tender; gay without wantonneſs, lively without caprice, conſtant without paſſion, diſcreet without conſtraint, delicate without being exacting and punctilious, and is always equal; for it has every thing it deſires, every thing it expects to have. This laſt article is the great point, and what diſtinguiſhes friendſhip from the connexions which are miſtaken for it, and from love.

When we form a connexion with a perſon, who pleaſes us at firſt ſight, and in whoſe favour we are ſome how or other prepoſſeſſed, we are not ſufficiently cold, to diſcuſs and weigh properly the pleaſure that is to be expected from this union: we meaſure it by our deſires, which are immenſe, and find a vaſt difference between what we experience, and what we expected.

This

This miſtake neceſſarily produces diſguſt. Why? Becauſe no kind of defect, no diſguſt was ever foreſeen. The path we entered, ſeemed ſtrewed with flowers, we find it filled with thorns. The heart, incenſed at being ſcorned, forgets all the pleaſures that are offered it, to dwell only on the afflictions it did not expect.

What is friendſhip then? It is a ſentiment, which of two hearts forms but one, which makes all inequality diſappear, and mixes all intereſt, all happineſs. Conceive what importance it is of, to make a ſtrict examination, before we conſent to ſuch an union. Thus perfect friendſhip cannot ſubſiſt but in two virtuous hearts. It does not ſuppoſe a conformity of tempers, underſtanding and talents; but, if it lowers the ſuperior with reſpect to underſtanding and virtue, it exalts the mind of the perſon who is inferior. The firſt eaſily bears with all the defects of the other's mind: the ſecond feels the full value of this protection, and recompenſes it by the livelineſs of his gratitude. The qualities of the heart are therefore eſſential to friendſhip: we ought to be leſs difficult about thoſe of the mind. It is very agreeable to find amiable qualities in a friend, and yet we ought to give a friend credit for them,

them, when they are ſupplied by thoſe deſerving of our eſteem; yet I would never adviſe chuſing as a friend a perſon of too indifferent an underſtanding; ſuch kind of people have commonly narrow minds; and, beſides, a friend is a counſellor, a confident of our moſt ſecret thoughts: we ought therefore to be perſuaded of the ſolidity of his counſels, and have no reaſon to fear his abuſing our confidence through weakneſs or folly.

Friendſhip, between two perſons of different rank, can ſeldom be real. The reſpect of convention, that is to ſay, that which is not produced by virtue, chills and alienates it: it is very ſeldom that the ſuperior does not think he confers a favour in offering his friendſhip; and never will friendſhip, offered in this manner, enjoy the privilege of fecundity; it will never produce an equal paſſion; it will produce gratitude, attachment, and zeal, but this is all. Nothing is more rare than friendſhip between parents and children; becauſe it is ſcarcely poſſible to forget the inequality of rank, and the ſuperiority of the firſt, curbs the ſecond. Friendſhip, in its foundation, is exempt from all intereſt; and this is one cauſe which renders it ſo rare between ſuperiors and inferiors; becauſe, with-

without perceiving it, we regard as a protector the perſon who ſhould appear as a friend only: but it will be ſaid, ought we to make a difficulty of being protected and ſuccoured by a friend? No, certainly: this is the touchſtone of friendſhip. Whenever we are humiliated by a benefit, we may be aſſured we love but little the perſon from whom we have received it. A true friend, in this caſe, partakes the pleaſure his friend has in obliging him, and receives his ſervices with the ſame joy he would feel himſelf in ſerving his friend. Our pride is hurt at receiving from another, and not at all at the benefits we procure ourſelves: then a real friend is another ſelf. Whenever we find ourſelves humiliated, or think we act a fine part, by ſerving, obliging, or beſtowing, it is a certain ſign that the identity is not perfect, and that we remember we are two diſtinct perſons.

This, madam, is my opinion concerning friendſhip; perhaps I may be miſtaken; but I ſpeak at a certainty, when I take the liberty to aſſure you, that I ſhould regard as the greateſt happineſs, my being able to inſpire you with the ſentiments I have juſt deſcribed, and that no perſon would deſerve it more than myſelf, was it the reward of the moſt reſpectful attachment, &c.

Behold then a formal diſſertation, and for what? To make my dear Harriet and her huſband comprehend, that I don't feel myſelf in the leaſt hurt by the exceſs of their ſervices; that I ſincerely ſhare the joy they feel at having rendered them; that I would not wiſh they had taken one ſingle trouble leſs, becauſe thereby they would have been deprived of a pleaſure. This is a proof of the moſt perfect friendſhip. I have an heart naturally proud; it would ſuffer to owe any thing to indifferent perſons, and would receive no conſolation, till it had repayed threefold the ſervice it had received; while I conſider, without the leaſt repugnance, the impoſſibility of making you a proper return. God keep me from having ſuch ſervices to do to you, as you have done to me.

I have a mind to chide you Harriet. You have not ſufficiently ſpared your friend in a certain affair. If you ever have any act of goodneſs to acquaint me with, of a perſon who ought to be dear to me, any hope of his return towards God; ah! pray diſpatch an expreſs, if you think an expreſs will arrive ſooner than the poſt. Over all the reſt of his actions, throw, I conjure you, the thickeſt veil.

What

What a parcel have I juſt received! Do you know, I felt the utmoſt indignation at the ſight of all this equipage of luxury and magnificence! The price of all theſe gewgaws, blonds, ribbonds, and rich ſilks, would have maintained a whole village for a year. Our ſervants, in raptures at the ſight of them, are almoſt afraid to touch them. The people in the village ſay, I muſt either be a princeſs, or ſome preſident's daughter *. I would have concealed from them, this magnificence at which I bluſh; but they have thought differently from me: they pretend that my ſimplicity will edify them the more, when they compare it with my former magnificence. I ſay former, my dear; for indeed I would not for the whole world wear here the plaineſt of theſe dreſſes; and I ſhould bluſh to conſecrate them to the ſervice of the altar, if I was not encouraged to have the boldneſs to preſume to offer to God things which I have made uſe of myſelf.

You know I am not naturally covetous, and that hitherto I have never valued riches much. I am very much altered, my dear Harriet, ſince I jumped with joy, when you acquainted me

* In places near the parliaments, the peaſants imagine, that, next to a prince, nobody is ſo great as a preſident.

with the greatneſs of my fortune. I have formed, I aſſure you, ſchemes to employ four times as much. I would not have a ſingle poor perſon in the world; that is to ſay, not a ſingle perſon, who might not get his livelihood by his labour. My deſires, which were lively enough on this article, when I was in the great world, extended no farther when we lived together. At preſent there are other neceſſities of human nature, which begin to affect me much more. My ſecond mother has thereon ſuch extenſive views, that ſhe can hardly talk of any thing elſe. Charity is a devouring fire: this fire keeps her in a kind of uneaſineſs, to uſe the expreſſion, when ſhe is not employed in doing good to her neighbour; ſo that there are few moments but ſhe is buſied in their ſervice; and if ſhe would relate her dreams, I am perſuaded nothing paſſes in her mind when ſhe is aſleep, but the exerciſe of ſome new good works. It ſeems as if all her words were ſparks, which ſet on fire whatever they come near; and when my huſband and I leave her, we find ourſelves entirely diſpoſed to devote the remainder of our lives, our fortunes, and even ourſelves, to the exerciſe of good works.

I muſt acquaint you candidly, my dear mother and tender ſiſter, that I feel ſuch a violent

diſguſt for the life that is led in the great world, that I ſhould conſider my being obliged to return to it again, as the greateſt puniſhment. I expect, as well as you, to be a mother ſoon; I ſhall, doubtleſs, ſhare the fruitfulneſs of our women, and ſhall then be told, that it is my duty to give my children an education ſuitable to their birth and fortune. That to enter again into this world, which I deteſt, will ſoon become a duty of my ſtation. How I ſhould lament, if I was forced to follow this advice! Alas! can any thing be preferable to being happy in this world and the next? Could I conduct my children to the foot of a throne, had I the power to make them the favourites of monarchs, to treble their fortunes, and accumulate on their heads the greateſt titles and honours; would all this, recompenſe the loſs of the bleſſings I at preſent enjoy, and which I expect in future? What happineſs, comparable to that of diſtributing happineſs; of giving, to uſe the expreſſion, a new exiſtence to an infinite number of beings, who ſeemed born only to vegetate in ignorance and miſery? We range about, and are perpetually agitated in ſearch of pleaſure in the great world; here we are ſurrounded with it, and have only to reach out our hands to poſſeſs and taſte it. The great are deſirous of being reſpected and feared; here we are be-

loved: thoſe who come near us, pour out benedictions on us; mothers teach their children to liſp out bleſſings with our names; and the laſt ſigh of theſe honeſt people, is a thankſgiving to the Almighty for the benefits they have received from my worthy mother and her aſſociates. For my part, I can hardly conceive how actions, which afford ſo pure and perfect a pleaſure, can ſtill merit an infinite glory hereafter. God muſt be very good to reward ſo liberally in another life, works which he repays an hundredfold in this. And ſhall I deprive my children of theſe ineſtimable bleſſings! Shall I go to teach them in the great world, to conſider themſelves as every thing, and the poor as nothing; to ſacrifice to imaginary wants, what might become the means of ſubſiſting ſo great a number of unhappy wretches! I will not hear of it, I ſhould indeed be worſe than the wicked father mentioned in the goſpel, who gives not a ſerpent to his children when they aſk him for bread. My pen is ſnached from me, otherwiſe I ſhould fill a ream of paper without expreſſing what I feel.

The Baron D'ASTIE *continues.*

YES, ladies, my Clariſſa would never finiſh; ſhe has devoted her children to march with us

through France from village to village, in order to ſave the peaſants from ignorance, poverty, miſery and guilt. We ſhall ſee her one of theſe days ſtop paſſengers on the high roads, and invite the poor to aſſemble together, and form new habitations. A modern Amphion; the ſweetneſs of her voice will make ariſe from the earth, not walls to ſurround cities, but humble cottages, which harbour innocent and happy minds. She calculates, and finds, that, notwithſtanding her immenſe fortune, ſhe ſhall be hard put to it for all the good ſchemes ſhe projects: what conſoles her is, that her children will carry on what ſhe has began. Don't you accidentally know any of thoſe philoſophers who have diſcovered the art of making gold? Be kind enough to ſend them to us, my Clariſſa will procure them a ready vent for their merchandize. I muſt relate to you one of her atchievements.

Some months ago three ill-looking men, well armed, paſſed through our village. My wife, who ſaw them at the window, invited them in to eat a bit of ſomething, and waited on them herſelf, like Sarah, though they had not the leaſt appearance of three angels. During breakfaſt, ſhe got acquainted with theſe honeſt gen-

tlemen; and, as never ſyren had a more enchanting voice, ſo well gained their confidence, that they immediately came to a confeſſion, and acknowledged they were ſmugglers. Good God! ſays ſhe, to what do you expoſe yourſelves, my good people? and immediately preached to them an excellent ſermon on the neceſſity of obedience to the laws and our prince: on the unhappineſs of a way of life, which muſt always have in view a ſcaffold, or death in ſin, ſince ſuch people are always determined to kill or be killed, rather than be taken. To tell you ſhe had the air of an angel when ſhe ſpoke, would be ſaying nothing but what you would eaſily comprehend; but to acquaint you that ſhe was capable of ſoftening theſe hearts of adamant, that ſhe forced them to ſhed tears, muſt ſeem aſtoniſhing. Inflamed by her ſucceſs, ſhe added, and why not quit ſo miſerable and dangerous a profeſſion, my dear friends? The neceſſity of maintaining our wives and children, obliges us to follow it, replied one of them. Alas! come here my children, ſays ſhe, you will here meet with a certain and quiet livelihood. Send your wives and children to us, and we will provide for them. The three men looked at one another; two of them accepted her propoſal, and here were two

boarders

boarders for our paſtors. The third was taken fifteen days after, and hanged the ſame week. At this news, the two proſelytes of my dear Clariſſa fell at her feet, called her their angel, their deliverers, vowed obedience to her: they haſtened to bring their families, and the widow and children of the unhappy wretch, who had deſpiſed her counſels: they are in their year of noviciate, and edify us by their ardour in labour, and their docility. The enthuſiaſm with which my Clariſſa's letter is filled, has produced this good effect: take care of yourſelves, ladies, it is a contagious diſtemper; I give you warning: ſhe has catched it from my mother, and has been very near communicating it to me; and I don't know whether you are not in danger of getting it alſo. I warn you of it, to diſcharge my conſcience.

CLARISSA *concludes.*

HEAVEN grant his prediction may be accompliſhed; not with reſpect to you, who would be a thouſand times better than me, if you were in my place; but with reſpect to the great number of idle rich, who incumber the earth with the weight of their uſeleſs ſelves, and

devour the ſubſtance which lawfully belongs only to the man who is employed for the public good. I would willingly barter the poſſeſſor of the philoſopher's ſtone, for half a dozen zealous perſons: it is not gold which we want moſt; treaſures are to be found in the earth, at the depth of three feet; the buſineſs is only to turn it up, and find perſons willing to become the ſoul of our labourers: the harveſt is great, but the labourers are few. Stop, Harriet, I am going to give you your miſſion. Raiſe us recruits among your dolls of both ſexes; propoſe to them to exchange their toys and nicknacks, for diſtaffs and ſpades; conjure them; promiſe them that they will find, in employments like ours, a cure for their ſpleen. Tell the learned, who make ſuch excellent diſcoveries for the advantage of agriculture, to join theory to practice; and their example would produce an happy revolution. Cities would be deſolated to the advantage of the provinces; the rich and the nobility would drive from their antichambers three parts of the idle fellows whom they detain from labour: France would become the treaſury, the magazine, the granary of Europe; not an inch of ground would be left uncultivated. Population would be doubled with labour, and produce for the king

a numerous

a numerous people, hardened by labour, fit for the fatigues of war. Plenty would take place of poverty, always dreadful when it is the conſequence of ſloth : in a word, we ſhould become the firſt nation in the univerſe, without exciting the envy of our neighbours.

LETTER XLI.

LADY HARRIET TO CLARISSA.

YES truly! your diſorder is contagious, my dear Clariſſa, my amiable ſiſter; and if it was not unbecoming, for a woman with her belly up to her chin, to hold a diſtaff, I ſhould not have quitted my ſpinning-wheel. I begin by the moſt eaſy work, as you percive; it is much eaſier to ſpin, than to preſide over country labours, and manage cattle. But, to talk ſeriouſly, my dear; I reſpect your deſigns; but, as your dear huſband has juſtly remarked, they are rather enthuſiaſtic. Do you think it poſſible to reclaim this vaſt crowd of people, who have ſo many years lived in an intoxicating ſtate of idleneſs? What ſtratagems do beggars make uſe of, to elude the orders of a wiſe policy, which endeavours to confine them in hoſpitals, where, by their moderate labour, they are furniſhed with the neceſſaries of life? But allowing this, which is impoſſible, how could you find means to employ them? Land would be wanting for the labourers. Beſides, who would be a ſoldier or a ſailor, if they had once taſted the ſweets of the tranquil life you have planned? Nothing can be more miſerable than the lives of

our

our peaſants, yet what will they not do to eſcape ſerving in the militia? What deſpair does the wretch experience, who is torn from his family! what diſtreſs, the unhappy parents! The caſe would be much worſe, if their native condition offered them real bleſſings to regret. Behold many objections, and there are an infinite number beſides. A numerous retinue ſeems neceſſary for the great, to impoſe on the vulgar, and to ſupport their grandeur. Do they not diſtribute among artiſans, the money you would have them expend in the country? France, indeed, is not the granary of Europe; but it is the ſtore-houſe of faſhions, where all nations come to furniſh themſelves. The Spaniards and Portugueze dig gold from the bowels of the earth; and the Engliſh cultivate agriculture and commerce, to purchaſe from France the neceſſary articles of luxury. The expences of a great king have been loudly exclaimed againſt; who, to uſe the expreſſion, made riſe out of the earth thoſe ſuperb edifices, thoſe enchanted gardens, which one would imagine owed their exiſtence to the touch of a ſkilful enchanter's wand. Let the expence be calculated, that theſe maſterpieces of art coſt, and the money that foreigners, who have come to admire them, have expended in France; and, I am perſuaded, the receipt

would over-ballance the coſt. Sumptuary laws, which are the preſervation of a ſmall ſtate, would cauſe the ruin and decay of a great kingdom. Every thing that promotes the circulation of money is there advantageous. Luxury in England is carried as far as in France, though it is of a different kind; yet our fields do not want huſbandmen. Nevertheleſs, what numbers of people does commerce take from agriculture! Leave the French, therefore, their numerous retinue, their ſnuff boxes, and brilliant toys. The number of idle cannot be put into competition, with the number of thoſe who are employed in a way uſeful to themſelves, though quite uſeleſs and ſuperfluous for thoſe who employ them. In morality, one ſingle unhappy perſon cauſes a misfortune; in phyſics and politics, frequently great advantages ariſe therefrom.

Obſerve, word for word, what was ſaid to me by an honeſt and able perſon, to whom I retailed your admonition, by way of beginning to fulfil the miſſion you have charged me with. Don't however think I blindly adopt his ideas. It is true, I remained mute as a fiſh in his preſence; I could find nothing to anſwer; and, yet I was ſenſible ſomething might be ſaid, in anſwer to what

what he aſſerted. When my vocation is improved like yours, I ſhall likely poſſeſs ſuperior lights, which will render me eloquent; till then, I deſire your inſtruction. After all, your ſyſtem has ſomething in it, which ſeduces, charms, and convinces me. Furniſh me with arms to defend it. I ſurrender myſelf to you, body and ſoul, to fulfil my miſſion.

My letter will be ſhort, I expect every hour the fatal moment. Remember that I am to bring a girl into the world this time, who ſhall reſemble you; contrive, if you pleaſe, in conſequence, to give an huſband to this future daughter. If you are with child of a girl, I ſhall never forgive you. We will next time make an exchange; I will have a boy, and you ſhall have a girl. Thoſe who hear me reaſon thus, lift up their ſhoulders. To deſire a daughter when perſons are of a certain rank, is an extravagance they can have no conception of. And, what would become of this name, if we had boys only? ſaid I, the other day, to an impertinent fellow, who preſumed to aſſert, that a woman of quality who was brought to bed of a girl, had a miſcarriage. Leave, replied he, to financers the care of furniſhing wives for our ſons; they labour to ſupport our nobility, our illuſtrious-

neſs,

neſs, by their great fortunes, which they willingly ſacrifice, to enter into a noble family. At preſent improper matches no longer frighten, provided, a heap of gold hides an obſcure origin. Add, that they ſacrifice thereto, the happineſs of their daughters, ſaid I; but, this is not the matter in queſtion. A girl ſuch as mine, though ſhe poſſeſſed only half the merit of her I have taken for my model, would be worth more to the ſtate, than twenty of theſe wrong-heads, who think themſelves the cleverest people in the world, when they ſucceed better than their coachmen, in raiſing a cloud of duſt on the ramparts. But it is talking to the deaf, my dear; come here, and teach them, by ſeeing you, to abate of the vanity which makes them think their ſex ſuperior to ours in every thing.

LETTER XLII.

MRS. DARBY TO CLARISSA.

NO, my dear, ſtay where you are; you will make a better figure there than here. Reckon me, I conjure you, among your proſelytes; and, if you cannot engage others to execute in great your good projects, we will endeavour to offer models of them in miniature. I will not obviate the anſwer, which my dear daughter Harriet deſires of you; but, in my opinion, no great genius is wanted to overturn the objections of her philoſopher. One ſingle perſon ſet in motion, at the beginning of this age, ſixty thouſand artiſans. I mean the indefatigable Mr. Languet, curate of St. Sulpice; a man to whoſe memory, ſtatues ought to have been erected; and, whom his ungrateful countrymen would have made repent his uſeful labours, if he had not had in view a more ſolid glory, than their vain applauſe. It is true, his zeal was ſeconded, and he every year received immenſe ſums. I am perſuaded, if he had lived longer, he would have done three times as much good. Eſtabliſhments which coſt a great deal to form, repay in the ſequel with uſury, what has been expended at firſt. Beſides, the ſources from

from which he drew assistance are not exhausted through his death; there is still a great number of good souls, who, tho' attached to the world by their condition of life, or incapable from want of talents to act themselves, would desire nothing more than to have an opportunity of contributing by their purse to works, which would produce such general good. One of the copies of the work, in which, your letter on friendship was inserted, has just fell into my hands; it contained some remarks on hospitals, which raised in me a curiosity to visit them. Alas! my dear, I am returned with a wounded heart. How much good remains to be done! How much is omitted or changed into evil, through the fault of a neglected management! I began with the General Hospital. It is a world, my child. I went there four different times, before I had examined all. Whatever human misery can offer most affecting, is there to be met with. A crowd of unfortunate wretches, abandoned by their parents from their very birth, are heaped one over another in rooms which, though of a prodigious size, are too small to contain them. Their countenances show they breathe a poisonous air, infected through the exhalations which proceed from their bodies. Hence, a great number of them perish. The rest work,

indeed, but with diſguſt, through conſtraint, and to avoid puniſhment; and in their hearts devote themſelves to idleneſs, to recompenſe themſelves for the diſguſt which labour occaſions. I interrogated ſeveral. Truly their minds were ſtill more neglected than their bodies. Nevertheleſs, they are inſtructed at particular hours: I even would believe thoſe who are charged therewith, act with zeal; yet they meet with but little ſucceſs; which muſt be attributed, in my opinion, to the vaſt diſproportion there is between the number of inſtructors, and of thoſe who want inſtruction. Why not increaſe the number of miſtreſſes? Why not uſe the utmoſt care in chooſing them, and in educating the children? This duty is conſidered, as but of little importance. Yet, in the ſpace of twenty years, above forty thouſand families might be procured for the ſtate, from this part alone. What a reſource for population! What a number of hands to augment the riches of the ſtate! I know that theſe children are put out at laſt; yet, I venture to affirm, the ſtate gains little thereby; and, that but few good mothers of families come out of theſe kind of places. Perſons who have taken girls as ſervants, or apprentices, out of this place, have aſſured me, they have had a great deal of difficulty,

ficulty, before they could reap any advantage from them; the faults of their firſt education had taken ſuch deep footing. There is in Paris another houſe, better governed, called, Bel-Air, a very proper name for it. The children are there educated with lenity: yet, I think, there is an eſſential fault in their education. I interrogated ſeveral of the great girls, who liked the place, and whoſe ambition extended no farther, than to remain there always, and I found that, lazineſs has a great ſhare in the attachment they have for this houſe, where they are ſubject to no hard work. I communicated this idea to a gentleman, who could not allow the truth of it; becauſe, in fact, theſe girls are employed. If they were ſo, in a proper manner, the houſe would ſoon become very rich. A maſter who employs workmen, maintains and pays them; yet, ſtill find means to enrich himſelf from their labour. Why does not the ſame thing happen in theſe houſes, which want revenues, inſtead of reaping an advantage from the induſty of the orphans? The reaſon is, becauſe this work is not performed with the ſame zeal, which the neceſſity of providing for the neceſſaries of life inſpires. Becauſe, a love of induſtry has not been inculcated into theſe children; nor has care been taken

taken to make them ſenſible, that their being employed uſefully, and for the public good, is in obedience to the divine law: Thou ſhalt eat thy bread with the ſweat of thy brow. This decree has been iſſued from the mouth of God himſelf; who ſhall dare to elude it? Devotion, piety, and chriſtianity, ought to conſiſt in employing our time in a ſpirit of penitence, to obey God. Children who ſucked in this maxim with their milk, would make induſtrious young women, would repay the ſtate the expences it had advanced to bring them up in their early years; and would afford means of extending the good work. I ſpeak only of the girls, my dear; for I have never made any obſervations on the management of the boys. I have obſerved with pleaſure, that the ſtate ſtudies how to reap an advantage from theſe children; and, that rewards are beſtowed on the peaſant, who will take them; which, nevertheleſs, will not prevent there remaining a ſufficient number to raiſe fine recruits, and to repeople the depopulated provinces.

The place where looſe and diſorderly women and girls are confined, is another part of the hoſpital, which I carefully viſited. Oh! what a vaſt field is there for zealous perſons! I

was

was perſuaded, at firſt, that religion had ſome ſhare in the confinement of theſe women; and that endeavours were uſed to gain them over to God, by gentle methods. Nothing at all of this kind, my dear; they go out worſe than when they came in; the rigour which is uſed towards them, exaſperates them, and they become thereby almoſt incorrigible. Alas! our miſſionaries croſs the ſeas, to convert idolaters to chriſtianity; and the ſervants of the faith are miſerably neglected. I am ſenſible it would be improper for miniſters of the lord to enter into this kind of hell, where theſe wretches, by ſwearing, recompenſe themſelves for the impoſſibility of their doing worſe where they are, for ſome months. Pious, truly charitable and zealous women, are the proper perſons to begin the cure of theſe poor abandoned wretches. Moſt part of them have not the leaſt idea of religion; they, therefore, ſhould be inſtructed in its principles, and we ſhould begin, by making them love it. The magiſtrate is charged only with the exterior policy, it is the province of piety to change their hearts. We ſee in this place women who have been there ſeveral times before; and, in all probability, will be brought there again: their confinement therefore anſwers no manner of purpoſe. As you are a ſcheming lady,

lady, build us ſome caſtles in the air, concerning this important matter. The ſincere converſion of half a dozen of theſe women a year, would do the ſtate more good, than the impriſonment of many thouſands of them for a ſhort time only. Thoſe who have began theſe eſtabliſhments have been in too much hurry; the queſtion at preſent is how to bring them to their utmoſt perfection. The converſion of theſe poor creatures would be a great means of population. They poiſon the human ſpecies in its very ſource.

If any body ſhould happen to read our letters, they would laugh at our pretenſions. A fine thing, for poor ſilly women to pretend to ſet themſelves up for reformers, in a kingdom governed by ſuch wiſe men, whoſe policy raiſes the admiration of ſtrangers. It is eſpecially a piece of impertinence, in two women, who are hardly received among the number of citizens. Impute it, if you pleaſe, to the influence of the climate; the air we breathe inſpires us with a love for it; and, I already find myſelf a French woman, without forgetting, however, my native country. Ah! I feel, from the emotions of my heart, that I am a citizen of the univerſe;

univerſe; and all mankind, whatever they are, are my brethren. Are we not all children of the ſame father? How can thoſe who are cold to the duties of humanity, preſume to ſay the Lord's prayer?

LET-

LETTER XLIII.

CLARISSA TO LADY HARRIET.

I FLATTER myſelf you are brought to bed, my dear; and, if I may believe our good women, happily. They ſay, that the more we ſuffer during pregnancy, the better we are in our lying-in; and you have ſuffered a great deal. At this rate, I ought to tremble for myſelf. I don't know what is become of that delicate conſtitution, of which, I uſed to complain formerly; I grow jolly without loſing my agility in the leaſt; I ſleep well, and have an excellent ſtomach. Between you and I, I think this happy change is owing to the regular life I lead here, and to exerciſe. You would laugh if you was to ſee me eat of a morning, a ſlice of bread, almoſt half a yard long, ſoaked in a glaſs of weak wine and water. Tea and coffee quite dried me up, I aſſure you; I was forced to wean myſelf from them, in my journey; and, I did not chuſe to adopt again, a cuſtom which I had ſo happily got rid of, and I find the benefit of it. In fact, I was born for the kind of life which I have adopted. On reflecting a little, I am not at all ſurprized at it. If labour is the calling of all the children of Adam, God muſt have

have given them a body, proper for what he has deſtined them to. Idleneſs ſhortens our days, I am certain. We here ſee vigorous old men, who no longer labour under diſorders, ſince they have redoubled their labour. As to our young people, health ſparkles in their eyes; and an hundred ſuch villages as ours, would not furniſh an apothecary with water to drink. The women bring their children into the world with a ſurprizing facility; they would abate nothing of their uſual labour, if my mother did not oblige them to uſe ſome precautions. She extends her care of them till the tenth day after their delivery. Formerly, they went abroad after the fourth day, which occaſioned the loſs of many, and made others become old, much earlier than they would, according to the common courſe of nature. At firſt, my mother had great difficulty to keep them within doors ſo long; they alledged the neceſſity of going to work. At laſt, ſhe has compaſſed it; and made them comprehend, that theſe ten days confinement, would ſave them the loſs of many more; by preſerving them from the diſorders, which were the conſequences of their former indiſcretion. Theſe little circumſtances ſeem trivial; yet they procure us an healthy and robuſt offspring. As I ſuppoſe you will be in a condition

dition to hear reading, when this letter ſhall arrive. I am going to anſwer your objections, my dear; I ſay your objections, though you have acquainted me they were another's. I know your way, you thought of them yourſelf, before they were mentioned to you.

If you had been told, that it was difficult to induce perſons, accuſtomed to idleneſs, to ſubmit to the yoke of labour, I ſhould have agreed with you. Your philoſopher pretends, that the thing is impoſſible; and brings, as a proof of his aſſertion, the difficulty of making the poor work, who are confined; and who, certainly would not remain four minutes in the hoſpital, if the doors were ſet open. I hence conclude, that the management is wrong. Animals are managed by fear; men are vanquiſhed by gentle means, and kindneſs only. What my mother acquainted me with, about the hoſpitals ſhe examined, Madam d'Aſtie had already told me: in this reſpect, her experience may ſafely be relied on.

The cuſtom of ſeeing wretched creatures perpetually, hardens hearts, which an ardent charity does not make relent. The poor are ſo ignorant, brutiſh, and unthankful; or rather,

ungrateful, that it requires a very ſublime virtue, to preſerve any degree of good nature in their ſervice. A zealous intendant, ſome time ago, begged my mother to communicate to him her ſentiments, on the police of an hoſpital he intended to found. All depends on the people, replied ſhe. The charity that is exerciſed on the body, ought to have, for its end, the good of the ſoul. Fear may oblige the poor to conform to regulations, without their becoming the better for it. If we would fulfil the ends which chriſtianity inſpires, we ſhould make them love theſe regulations. Among thoſe whom we confine, there are old men paſt their labour; and there are others, ſtill robuſt and ſtrong. We ſhould make an advantage of theſe laſt, for the purpoſes of agriculture and population. The firſt ſtep towards this, is to gain their hearts and confidence; and, how much muſt it coſt the hoſpital, before it can compaſs this? Inſtruction muſt follow. We muſt endeavour to make them chriſtians, and we ſhall ſoon have men. Among the vaſt number of poor, ſome are leſs perverſe, and of a better diſpoſition than others: we ſhould begin, by gaining theſe, by rewarding their docility, with little preſents, praiſes, and teſtimonies of friendſhip. There are few hearts which are not acceſſible

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on this ſide. While the poor were employed in work, ſome charitable perſons ſhould ſtudy means to eſtabliſh them. The proſpect of an happy and tranquil ſtate, would ſoften their confinement; and, by driving away deſpair from their minds, would diſpoſe them to a ready compliance, with whatever was required of them.

In what hoſpitals are theſe precautions taken or this management made uſe of? If any ſuch exiſt, how few are they! Beſides, I repeat it after my mother, thoſe who are entruſted with theſe kinds of foundations, have too much work to do it well, ſuppoſing they were ever ſo well diſpoſed to it. Overloaded and fatigued with labour, they forget the motive which induced them to devote themſelves to the ſervice of the poor; and works of the moſt heroic charity, become inſenſibly works of ſlavery.

It is not for private perſons to find, or rather procure, a remedy for ſuch evils. But, you aſk me to build caſtles in the air, and I comply with your requeſt. As well amuſe myſelf in that, as in knotting, or ſhuffling a pack of cards. This is the anſwer I make beforehand to thoſe who

pretend I loſe my time in forming ſyſtems which will never be realized.

If I poſſeſſed power equal to my good will; or, if thoſe who poſſeſs it would adopt my ſyſtem; I ſhould conſider that there were two things to be done: to cure or leſſen the ills, which at preſent ſubſiſt; and to prevent thoſe which might happen hereafter. What are the evils moſt contrary to the phyſical good of the ſtate? Depopulation; and a miſery which diſſolves the connections, which ought to attach men to their country; and makes of them members, who, having no dependance on any thing, love nothing, nor concern themſelves about any thing. Such people deſerve not the name of citizens. As they cannot be more miſerable than they are, as they enjoy nothing but the air they breathe, and as the kingdom might be turned topſy turvy without their ſuſtaining the ſmalleſt loſs, they care not whether it proſpers, or is utterly overthrown; their condition being ſo bad, that it cannot become worſe, every change ſeems advantageous to them, from the hopes of fiſhing in troubled waters, and bettering their ſtate. Theſe people are ever at the ſervice of all turbulent minds, and even of enemies of the kingdom: they would

would behold a change of their maſter with a brutal indifference; all the ties which attach men to their prince, either have never exiſted with them, or are broken through. Such people are a charge to the government in time of peace, and very dangerous in time of war, eſpecially of civil inteſtine broils: they want only a licentious chief. The loſs of a million at leaſt of theſe people in a ſtate, would occaſion no vacancy; they are to a ſtate, the ſame as vermin to corn; ought they therefore to be loſt? No; we ſhould endeavour to change them, to reconcile them to the ſtate, and to attach them to it by the tye of love. If the difficulty of remedying this preſent evil diſcourages, the eaſe of preventing it in future, ought to conſole us. Let things be left to my management, and in twenty years this race of hornets ſhall give place to citizens; who, looking on themſelves as children of the ſtate, will love it with that love which every man has for his family. The matter would be, to take from all beggars and vagabonds, their children of both ſexes, that are more than ſeven years of age. This ſtep would forward ſeven years the promiſed metamorphoſis, thirteen years more only would be wanting.

People inceſſantly exclaim, that the revocation of the edict of Nantes, has depopulated the ſtate. If the ſyſtem that I propoſe, was adopted means muſt be ſought to diſcharge the too great overplus of inhabitants, by ſettling colonies abroad. France, though ſo large, could not contain its ſubjects. I ſhall make a calculation of this new population, after having firſt pointed out its ſources.

The religious ſtate is the perfection of chriſtianity. Jeſus Chriſt became the defender thereof when he told Martha, that her ſiſter had choſen the better part, which could not be taken from her. Let us not ſnatch from the feet of Jeſus, thoſe who are attentive only to hear his word, and meditate thereon: this vocation is very excellent, but it is very rare, and the relaxation of their primitive inſtitutes, makes the multiplication of regulars be conſidered as an uſeleſs expence: to diminiſh their number, nothing more is required than to oblige them to live according to their primitive rules; the noviciates * would ſoon become deſert; and while La Trappe and the orders which, by coming near its ſeverities, were peopled with worſhippers in ſpirit and truth,

* Noviciates in monaſteries, are places ſet apart for the reception of young perſons, who intend takingthe religious habit

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the other monaſteries, by degrees, would fall to decay, for want of inhabitants, eſpecially if the king fixed the time of taking the religious habit to a maturer age, than at preſent is the cuſtom; a time too near infancy, to be capable of the reflexion which ſuch a ſtep requires, that if it does not lead to the firſt ſeats in Heaven, precipitates to the loweſt hell. The time of life which has been wiſely preſcribed for taking holy orders, ought, in my opinion, to be conſidered as the propereſt age for taking ſolemn vows.

What a reſource to the ſtate would this dimnution of monks offer! The eſtates which would become uſeleſs to them, might be employed in the education of a vaſt number of children, taken away from beggars, or voluntarily given by poor parents, who have too numerous a family; what ſources opened for population, agriculture, the army, marine, and manufactures! What ſources of plenty and riches for the ſtate!

Let us calculate at the loweſt the number of marriages which muſt happen from putting theſe ſchemes in execution. The foundling hoſpital at Paris generally has between ſix and ſeven thouſand children at nurſe; if theſe children were better taken care of, one half of them at

leaſt, would be ſaved; who, when arrived at man's eſtate, would produce at leaſt two thouſand marriages a year. Reckon double the number for the other provinces, and certainly this would be under rating them vaſtly; and the foundling children alone would furniſh each year ſix thouſand marriages, which, in thirteen years, amounts to —— 78,000 families.

Add thereto ten thouſand marriages of the children of the ſtate; that is to ſay, of thoſe who were taken from vagabonds, &c. — 10,000

Young perſons who take religious orders through infancy, perſuaſion, force, lazineſs, and other ſuch motives, in thirteen years, at leaſt — — 40,000

This is for this laſt claſs, no more than three thouſand marriages and a few over each year ——

Total 128000 families.

Here are then 128000 families more in the kingdom, in only thirteen years; which, at four children for each family, would, in twenty years,

years, produce 512000 inhabitants, capable of contracting freſh marriages. If we had profited by this reſource immediately after the revocation of the edict, ſhould we not have replaced our loſſes? I am ſenſible it may be objected, that all thoſe who would contract theſe marriages, would not have lived in a ſtate of celibacy, excepting thoſe who became religious. To this I anſwer,

That the children of beggars and vagabonds, far from being the riches of the ſtate, are its vermin; that the greateſt part of the others, would not marry for fear of bringing into the world more wretches. Therefore, as I remarked at firſt, thoſe who abſolutely do marry, ſeldom make good citizens; they ſhould be made to have an affection for their country by benefits: let them eat coarſe bread, and be bedewed with their ſweat; this is according to the common order of nature; but let them not entirely want it. How procure it for them? Thus.

I think the eſtates, which the charity of the faithful has conſecrated to the Lord, could not, without ſacrilege, be employed for profane uſes: the number of monaſteries being leſſened, their

revenues might be employed to ſettle theſe new families, after having been applied to the education of thoſe of whom they are to be compoſed. Shall be educated in hoſpitals? No; hoſpitals produce none but lazy people: they ought to be formed into colleges of huſbandmen, who ſhould divide their time between robuſt country employments, and the ſtudies fit to promote the progreſs of agriculture. There is no profeſſion ſo bad, but it will maintain the perſon who practiſes it, we commonly ſay, and with truth. If a private perſon can gain his expence, certainly thoſe who live in common, and expend leſs, may ſubſiſt by their labour. From fifteen years of age theſe children, inſtead of being a charge, might gain ſomething more than ſufficient for their maintenance, which, being put by till it amounted to a ſum, might contribute to their eſtabliſhment. If agriculture was puſhed as far as it poſſibly could be in France, it is certain the price of proviſions would be lowered. The overplus of theſe children, who could not be employed in cultivating the ground, would furniſh hands for our manufacturers: being maintained at an eaſier rate, the price of workmanſhip would be more moderate, which would turn to the advantage of the community in general, who might then furniſh them-

themſelves with all kinds of neceſſaries in greater plenty. This advantage would be trifling in compariſon to what would ariſe from exportation: the French would become the purveyors of all Europe, becauſe they would be able to afford their goods at a lower rate. Theſe new citizens, who owed their exiſtence to the ſtate, would have an affection for it. Labour would loſe half its hardſhips, from a habit contracted in infancy: thoroughly affected by the great principles of religion, they would fulfil the laborious duties of their ſtation, with chearfulneſs and ardor. The certainty of an eternal recompenſe, which is the infallible conſequence of a voluntary ſubmiſſion to our duties, would conſole them for the ſmall advantage they reaped from it in this world. Abſolute poverty would no longer be ſeen, and with poverty all the vices which it cauſes, would diſappear.

But how muſt we manage to ſucceed in the execution of this project? I repeat it again, it abſolutely depends on the care that is taken in the choice of the maſters and miſtreſſes who are to ſuperintend theſe eſtabliſhments. A city which now contains twenty religious houſes, would hardly have two remaining, if they were obliged to keep ſtrictly to their primitive regula-

tions. In the room of these monasteries, which would fall to decay of themselves, one single community of each sex in great cities should be formed, for the training up these masters and mistresses: they should be kept there several years for the sake of instruction, and only those set apart for this purpose, who gave proofs of a solid enlightened piety, free from superstition. It would be necessary for some zealous ecclesiastics to bestow their cares on them; and the persons selected for masters and mistresses, should be persons of a mature age, who, having an inclination for a single life, would have no other view than to dedicate themselves to the Lord, in the important ministry which was entrusted to them: they should be freed from all temporal cares, by a genteel provision for their necessary wants, in health, sickness, and old age: great good nature and mildness should be required of them; it is the only method of gaining hearts. I am sensible they would have occasion for great firmness; but without relaxing the fixed regulations, they should take the trouble to convince the poor children of the necessity of these laws, which tended only to their advantage. It would be necessary for these masters and mistresses to have good understandings and talents; their situation in life would require these qualifications.

fications. Their ſtate would be a middle one, between a religious life, and the common way of living in the world; and thoſe who devoted themſelves thereto, would have at leaſt as many opportunities of attaining perfection, as in a convent.

The Pagans were ſenſible of the importance of taking care of the education of children. Minos, Licurgus, and the antient Perſians, reaped from it all the fruit that could be expected from the imperfection of the methods which they made uſe of. What might we not expect from a chriſtian education, where God grants the neceſſary grace, to do what he commands?

I anſwer, beforehand, an objection that might be made. General laws concerning education are only proper for ſmall ſtates, and it would be ſcarcely poſſible to eſtabliſh them in a great kingdom. Each province ſhould ſuperintend the education of its poor. Thanks to the piety of our anceſtors, there are but few where the monks have not eſtates which were bequeathed to them, to be employed in relieving the poor. To apply theſe eſtates according to the intention of the donors, would be an act worthy of a king;

king; it might abſolutely be done without leſſening the number of monaſteries. La Trappe, which has not an income of four hundred pounds per annum, contains one hundred and fifty religious; and diſtributes plenty of alms, without reckoning the expence of entertaining viſitors. The labour of the monks ſupplies the want of a revenue. What prevents others from imitating them? We ſee that an artificer maintains his wife and children by his labour; why then could not a monk bring up a poor child? But it will be ſaid, the monk is confined to a long office *; has hours ſet apart for meditation and ſtudy; muſt confeſs people, preach, and ſay maſs. The anſwer is eaſy. The monk is lodged for nothing, the artificer is not: every monaſtery has large gardens; the true religious would there find half his ſuſtenance. It is true, it would be a leſs delicate food than fiſh; but the poor, who work as hard as the monks ought to do, are contented with vegetables, and make ſhift without fleſh meats, or fiſh. Ought the voluntary poor to be more delicate? No. Have they made a ſolemn vow of poverty, only to free themſelves from poverty, and that they might want for nothing? If they preach, they are paid; if they compoſe books, their works

* A part of the breviary.

produce

produce them a revenue, which far exceeds their wants: the retribution they receive for saying mass, amounts to half as much as a poor handicraft man can earn in a whole day. Do these last live fewer years than monks? Have they more disorders?

To Mrs. DARBY.

I HAVE obeyed you, my dear mother; this is what I would do, if God had granted me power equal to my good will. Heaven grant I neglect not the works which God has put into my hands. The time draws near when you are to be restored to me again. I shall suspend my resolutions till your arrival; they are in general to realize my schemes in miniature, to put to this use the overplus of my fortune, which our manner of living renders very considerable. If any of the happy of the age should read the distribution of our hours, the frugality of our table, and the simplicity of our dress, they would pity us; and we, on our side, cannot help entertaining a much more justly founded compassion for them. Peace, pleasure, tranquility, health, and innocence, are blessings which we abundantly enjoy. Who among them can boast of possessing these invaluable treasures?

Tell

Tell my dear Harriet, that my husband has almost finished his journal, and that she shall have it soon. It would have been finished sooner, but our duties must take place of our amusements. He superintends the works at the hill, while madam d'Astie and I preside over the cookery of the labourers. How little is nature contented with! One only of those sumptuous dinners which I have formerly ordered, would have been sufficient to feed two hundred of our workmen. When I think of it, I still blush at our three dishes; and am consoled only by the pleasure of regaling those who are recovering from sickness. I will not say with the remains of our table; (for it would give me uneasiness to send them a cold bit;) but a bit from our table. Jesus Christ is always served first, as he ought to be.

LETTER XLIV.

Lady HARRIET's Anſwer to CLARISSA.

GOD grant, my dear Clariſſa, that the frugal life you lead, may preſerve you from the horrid pains I have ſuffered, as it has freed you from the inconveniencies of which I was the victim, during nine months. I make an oath, if I am ever in a way of being a mother again, to try your regimen. It is exactly a month this day, ſince I was brought to bed of a fine boy. If you have managed in conſequence of my firſt reſolutions, immediately make an alteration; and, remember that I want a laſs for this little angel. I ſhall tell you, that you have robbed me; and, that I ſhall conſole myſelf for it only, through hopes of ſharing our fortunes with each other, as well as hearts. I have attained the heighth of friendſhip. Clariſſa, your daughter ſhall be a great lady, with my ſon; and, I don't at all conſider the diſproportion of theſe two children's fortunes. It would be worſe ſtill, if we were to loſe our law ſuit; we ſhould then be very poor, and my ſon would be a very inconſiderable perſon; without my loſing hopes of hearing him one day call you mother. He ſhall be early accuſtomed to call you

you ſo; and, whatever pleaſure the ſight of him, gives me, I will ſacrifice it to the advantage of having him brought up under your management, on condition you continue ſubmiſſive to your wiſe directreſs. I like the plan of your little houſhold; and, without vanity, I had a mind to put ours on the ſame footing. You thereby gain an inhabitant. I reſtore to agriculture, one of my men ſervants, and a maid who was employed under the cook. The cook, no longer buſied, in preparing ſix and thirty different ragouts, can do without her. The retrenchment of our table, puts us in a condition to portion this couple; three hundred livres ſeemed to them a fortune; and, they will employ this ſum according to your direction. You will render me covetous, Clariſſa; I ſtudy every day to diſtinguiſh my real, from imaginary wants. I cannot, in the rank of life, wherein Heaven has placed me, reduce myſelf, like you, to a ſtuff gown; but, I clearly perceive, that without making myſelf particular, by retrenching the expences of meer luxury and whim; ſuch as perfumes, flowers, &c. I ſhall be able to ſettle ſuch a family every year. This idea makes me amends for the little violence I undergo, in weaning myſelf from all theſe gewgaws. You ſhan't be quit for one family: Mr. Balfour's

four's valet de chambre is in love with your Fanny; ſhe, with the deſcription you have given us of your rural life, and is deſirous of partaking its ſweets. I have tried her vocation, by telling her, that, accuſtomed ſo long to a plentiful table, and eaſy employments, ſhe could not comply with a peaſant's way of life, and would ſink under the fatigue: ſhe is vext, and aſks me, whether ſhe can't do what the baroneſs d'Aſtie has done and what her dear miſtreſs does at preſent? She ſays, ſhe ſhall be uſed to it by degrees; and that, if ſhe is not fit for hard labour, yet ſhe can teach the little children to ſpin cotton. By our mother's advice, ſhe has been a month at the Filles de St. Thomas de ville neuve, at St. Germains en laye, where there is a large ſchool of little ſpinſters, founded by the deceaſed Mr. Languet. She is returned, enchanted with it. The little girls come in the morning, and bring in a baſket their breakfaſts, and dinner; and leave off work, only while they receive inſtruction. At the end of the week, the cotton they have ſpun is weigh'd, and they are paid: the leaſt of all, overjoyed, carry home ſome pence; the biggeſt have no more; but, the remainder is laid by, to cloath them every year, and the overplus is given to their parents. By this means, the mothers, ridded of

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the trouble of their children the whole day, work themſelves; and theſe children, inſtead of being a charge, are an advantage to them, after the firſt year; for what they earn the firſt year, belongs to the miſtreſs, and ſerves to pay for the cotton they ſpoil at firſt.

You have ſeen in the gallery at Windſor, a picture of a lockſmith, whom Love made a painter; and, you ſhall ſee in your village, a ſtocking weaver, who owes his calling to the ſame maſter. I mean the valet of Mr. Balfour, who has preſented to his maſter the firſt fruits of his labour. He will weave the cotton which his wife ſpins, and offers himſelf to inſtruct ſome foundlings. Here is a new branch of manufacture for you. I ſhould ſee all theſe ſet out with pleaſure, if our mother was not reſolved to accompany them herſelf. Ah! Clariſſa, I cannot reconcile to myſelf the idea of loſing her, in the leaſt. Is it poſſible you ſhould be amidſt ſuch plenty, while your poor Harriet is left quite deſtitute? What will become of all my good reſolutions, when I am deprived of her, who ſuſtained me in thoſe moments, wherein it ſeemed almoſt impoſſible to fulfil them? Where is friendſhip, Clariſſa? Ought it not to engage you, to make an effort in my favour? You would

would have her the reſt of her life; would a year be too much for me? I am thoroughly ſenſible of the indiſcretion of my requeſt; beſides, was I to obtain from your tenderneſs this heroic ſacrifice, the firmneſs of our mother would render it uſeleſs; ſhe thinks herſelf called where you are, and reproaches herſelf for all the moments ſhe loſes here. I ſhall not have to reproach myſelf, with having neglected one of thoſe which remain for me to enjoy her, and ſhall endeavour to make a proviſion to ſerve me my whole life.

Finally, Fanny and her huſband, far from being a charge to the village, undertake to provide furniture for their companion, who is not ſo rich as them; they have three hundred guineas between them; and, flatter themſelves they ſhall be able, with this ſum, to eſtabliſh a little ſtocking manufactory; prepare ſcholars for them. I entirely coincide with your opinion, about the means of peopling France with a new race, who might be compared with the myrmidons, who, from ants become men, derived from their firſt origin, a great inclination for induſtry. Thus the poſterity of thoſe whom you have brought up, will never forget theirs. I am only permitted to fill four ſides, and muſt therefore finiſh. Our mother continues.

Mrs.

Mrs. DARBY *to* CLARISSA.

INDEED, my dear, ſhe has ſuffered a great deal, and has bore it with a patience, that you know was not the effect of her natural conſtitution. My poor heart is almoſt diſtracted, when I think, that, in four months hence, you muſt undergo a like trial; ſee how imperfect I am! I am convinced, that ſuffering is a bleſſing; I even think I reap good myſelf, from thoſe which God ſends me; and yet, I cannot, without the utmoſt terror, behold perſons ſuffer, whom I love. Without a compliment, my dear, if I could have brought into the world lady Harriet's child, and could do the ſame by yours, I would do it, I think, if it was only that I might ſuffer leſs. Our friend was in great danger for fifteen days; and it was this which prevented my writing to you. I neither would deceive you, nor make you uneaſy. I had not an heart to conceal her ſituation from her: to have done it, in my opinion, would have been the greateſt cruelty. Her attendants conjured me not to frighten her; they ſaid, it would certainly kill her. I raiſed myſelf above all their fears; I had promiſed her to do ſo, I kept my word, uſing every poſſible precaution. She underſtood

derſtood me in a moment; and, with a conſtancy and reſignation, very rare in a perſon of her age, ſettled her ſpiritual affairs. Some young ladies of her acquaintance, were afraid of her falling into ſuch terrors, as they themſelves ſhould have fell into, on ſuch an occaſion; I did not loſe this opportunity of remarking to them, the advantage of having lived in innocence, when on a death bed. I hope the reflections they made on this ſubject, will produce a good effect. Harriet promiſes to make them recollect, what they have ſaid to her about it ſince her recovery, which has been very quick. She deſired me not to let you know ſhe had been in danger; I don't know what end this could have anſwered; for I am ſatisfied that, my dear Clariſſa is thoroughly perſuaded, that God has no need of a lying-in, or a diſtemper, to finiſh our days, when he thinks proper ſo to do. I know ſhe has accuſtomed herſelf to conſider every day as the laſt of her life; and, that ſhe thinks of it without dread. The fear of God is, without doubt, the beginning of wiſdom; but, I have always remarked with pleaſure, that your confidence in him, ſo ballanced this fear, that it neither troubled nor diſcouraged you; and, I have frequently returned thanks to his divine goodneſs, for having this way conducted you to himſelf.

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Continue, my dear child, to conſider heaven as the only abode where you ſhall be freed from the fear of ſin, and the inevitable evils of this life; ſupport this life, becauſe it puts you into a condition to labour for the other, which is eternal. This enduring of life, is all that can be required of a chriſtian, whoſe faith is lively.

I have read, with pleaſure, your viſionary ſchemes for encreaſing population; would to God, that thoſe who have the power in their hands, would form ſuch another, and put it in execution. But, as this is not to be expected, do yourſelf in miniature, what you could wiſh was done in great; perhaps, your good example will excite ſome rich perſons to ſecond you. You have very properly obſerved, that all depends on thoſe who preſide over the work. If you do not form perſons, capable of ſupporting this good work after your deceaſe, avarice, and private intereſt, will ſoon be the means of deſtroying it: and, in an hundred years hence, no remains of it will be ſeen. Man is a clock, the weights are always tending to deſcend; and neceſſarily require ſome perſon to be attentive to wind them up. What renders this renovation more difficult, is becauſe we cannot expect to ſuſtain ſuch like eſtabliſhments

by

by fine diſcourſes, examples are wanted. If the world could have a conception of the charms of the life to which you have devoted yourſelf, ſuch perſons as madam d'Aſtie would be multiplied: unhappily, its charms are felt only by thoſe who exerciſe it; and, your kind of life, viewed at a diſtance, will always ſeem inſupportable to people who are in a condition to ſecond you. I have been charmed with Fanny's reſolution of ſettling with you; this girl is quite fit to enter into all your views; it is to be hoped that God will inſpire others with a deſire to ſecond you; and, if he is graciouſly pleaſed to grant you children to inherit your vocation, as well as fortune; you may flatter yourſelf, the good you do will ſurvive you.

There are two ſorts of people who may contribute to your work. The rich who are deſirous of working their ſalvation, yet are attached from their circumſtances to the great world, might aſſiſt you with their fortunes: there are to be met with alſo, humane, ingenious men; who, without being animated by the ſpirit of chriſtianity, would take a pleaſure in aſſiſting you with their overplus of fortune, thro' a conviction alone, that your foundations muſt procure the greateſt advantages to the ſtate.

Their motives ought not to be examined too nicely: though leſs perfect than thoſe of the former, they are laudable; to be a good citizen, to love our country, is a virtue.

The ſecond ſort of people, who might aid the ſucceſs of your enterprizes, are thoſe who would pay with their perſons; and, theſe are incomparably the moſt neceſſary. By rigour, authority might force the peaſant to ſubmit to a part of the regulations which your people follow, without reaping the ſame benefit from it: whatever is done by force, cannot be of long duration. The eſſential point is to have perſons, who, by their examples would make theſe rules be loved. What numbers of poor nobility might find a reſource by aſſiſting your good intentions; and thereby emerge from the ſtate of poverty, in which they live! I ſay, like you, child, I muſt haſten to finiſh, for fear I ſhould never finiſh, there might be ſo much ſaid on this important article.

I propoſe ſetting out very early in the ſpring. We ſhall travel commodiouſly, though with great œconomy. We have beſpoke a cart, covered with oil ſkin, with hampers underneath, well ſtuffed with hay, to keep our feet and legs warm.

warm. We ſhall go in this carriage as far as Beziers, with two horſes, which are to be bought here. If it is leaſt expenſive to go from Beziers by the canal, we ſhall ſell our horſes there; if not, we ſhall come, men and beaſts together. Mr. and Mrs. Balfour would have me take a coach; but I won't liſten to this propoſition. It would coſt much more, and would only be fit to light fires with, when we arrived at your village; whilſt our little cart will become your equipage, in your little journeys, from one ſettlement to another; and, at other times will be of uſe to the community. Mr. Balfour's ſervant, who marries the kitchen maid, is an excellent coachman. What we ſave by this manner of travelling, ſhall be devoted to charity; it will enoble whatever ſeems mean and pitiful in our method of performing this journey.

LETTER XLV.

From the Baroneſs D'ASTIE to Mrs. DARBY.

I Do not in the leaſt, leave it to our child's care, to give you an account of her actions; I diſtruſt the punctuality of her pen, when ſhe is to ſpeak of herſelf; ſhe would paſs over facts, with ſuch a rapidity, as to leave them for you to gueſs at. I never ſaw ſo much activity, in ſo diſcreet, regular, and calm a mind. She does every thing with ſuch coolneſs, as if ſhe had nothing elſe to do; and fails not to multiply the objects of her cares, in a manner that ſeems almoſt miraculous; for, ſhe has undertaken herſelf, what would very well employ three perſons. As to the reſt, ſhe does not deceive you about her health, ſhe is perfectly well; and, if her ſhape, which every day loſes ſomething of its delicacy, did not ſhow her condition, it would never be ſuſpected that ſhe was far gone in her pregnancy. It is but juſt that ſhe ſhould ſhare the advantages of our peaſants, ſince ſhe ſo chearfully joins in their ſolicitude; not having been able to obtain permiſſion to partake of their laborious employments, as ſhe wiſhed. In this alone, ſhe has given me ſome trouble; and I was a great while, before I could make her

her underſtand that God having placed her at the head, to become feet and arms, would be an act of diſobedience to his divine commands. Notwithſtanding ſhe does not fail to employ hers; her ſpinning wheel is never from her ſide, except when ſhe is writing, or at her meals; ſhe has excited an aſtoniſhing emulation among our ſpinſtreſſes; and, the quantity of thread is increaſed a full fourth, ſince ſhe has been amongſt us. Our women, after her example, ſpin or knit, as they go along; even thoſe who go to Bourdeaux every week, work during the journey. Oh! how powerful is the force of example! and what might not be obtained from men, if, inſtead of multiplying precepts and ſermons, thoſe who deliver them, would execute themſelves, what they recommend to others. I am going to acquaint you with your daughter's conqueſts within this month.

She carefully informed herſelf of the character's of ſeveral gentlemen, who, in old ruinous houſes, which they decorated with the name of caſtles, dragged on in ignorance a miſerable life; ſhe had a mind to pay them a viſit. We have a great number of ſuch families in the neighbourhood. Fame, which enlarges every thing, had acquainted them with the marriage of my

ſon, with an Engliſh lady, richer than a princeſs, whoſe cloathes were nothing but gold. This account had excited in them, a great deſire to be acquainted with her; but, the ſtatelineſs of our poor neighbours, would have got the better of their curioſity; and, proud of their old parchments, we muſt have exhibited ours to prove, that our anceſtors had quitted the plow a few hours before theirs. Our child, above theſe trifles, reſolved to obviate them: it is true her viſit was not diſintereſted; ſhe was deſirous of ſearching in theſe ruins, to try whether ſhe could not find ſomething fit for her purpoſe. An aſs, which ſhe makes uſe of, in her little journies to the mountain and elſewhere, was the equipage, ſhe employed laſt week, to viſit the whole environs of this place. I had acquainted her beforehand with their manner of behaviour and cuſtoms. The girls, with wooden ſhoes on their feet, carefully preſerved the old bits of tinſel, which belonged to their great-grandmothers; and oſtentatiouſly dreſſed themſelves out with them, on Sunday's and holidays. Woe to the wealthieſt peaſant, if he then preſumed to look them in the face, or not ſalute them in the moſt reſpectful manner; the fathers and brothers would joyfully lay hold of ſuch an opportunity, to draw their ruſty ſwords,

to

chaſtiſe the fool-hardy wretch, who had dared to ſhow ſuch diſreſpect. My daughter carefully collected together all the knicknacks, which ſhe had conſidered as uſeleſs to her; viz. new ribbonds, or which had been but little wore, pompoons, blond laces, artificial flowers, and gauzes. She added to theſe rags, all her gowns, and petticoats, which ſhe could not convert into ornaments for the church. You know ſhe had a very fine wardrobe. Sacks of ſtriped taffety, painted ſilk, and printed linnen, of which ſhe had twenty-two remaining, and alſo ſome night caps, trimmed with ordinary lace; which, for the future, were to be worn only on great holidays. She made them up into as many parcels as ſhe had viſits to make; obſerving to put the trinkets on one ſide, and the cloaths on the other; for, ſhe was willing to ſpare their pride.

The rumour of her intended viſit and of her preſents, outſtripped her ſpeed, and had began to ſoften the vanity of our neighbours. The leaſt haughty received us at the door of their houſes; while the ladies, in a little paltry mean room, which they called a parlour, were conſidering about the punctilios they ſhould obſerve at our firſt meeting. My daughter charmed them all at firſt ſight; and, by an eaſy politeneſs free from

ſervility or pride, made them eaſily comprehend ſhe was at leaſt born their equal. This firſt viſit was ſhort, ſhe had deſigned twenty-four hours for each family; but, in two of them, ſhe ſtaid three whole days, for the following reaſon. After the firſt night, ſhe aſked permiſſion of the mothers to preſent the young ladies with a few Engliſh trinkets; and, after ſome ceremony, the parcel of trinkets was opened, admired, preſented, and accepted. She afterwards regretted her having nothing new, to offer them for themſelves; and aſked if ſhe might preſume to offer ſomething, which might ſerve for furniture: and then, undid her ſecond parcel. She did not take this liberty, except in the two houſes where ſhe had ſtaid the longeſt; in the others, ſhe, under pretence of conſulting the miſtreſs of the family, about the uſe ſhe ſhould put ſeveral things to, which ſhe did not intend to wear any more, ſpread out her goods, and, watching their looks, laid hold of the firſt opportunity of offering them. A ſingle word, as, It is a great pity to make up into furniture ſuch good cloaths as theſe, made her reply immediately, If they had been new, I ſhould have taken the liberty of offering them to theſe ladies; but, I did not dare to preſume ſo far. There then aroſe a combat between

their

their avarice and pride; and, as ſhe aſſiſted both paſſions, her offer was at laſt accepted. By theſe means, ſhe has ſo gained the hearts of this nobility, that ſhe can make them do whatever ſhe pleaſes; and has already formed conſiderable projects onthis head.

Our laſt viſit was at a village about ſix miles diſtant from us, where lived two gentlemen, couſin germains, whoſe wives had been ſo fruitful, that one of them had fourteen children, and the other twelve, and of theſe twenty-ſix eighteen were girls. What pen can deſcribe the miſerable life theſe unhappy people led! They could ſcarcely procure a bellyful of black, coarſe bread, ſuch as dogs would refuſe to eat, unleſs half famiſhed. Nevertheleſs, they made an effort to give us a good reception. Some old fowls were killed, and white bread ſent for from a neighbouring town; and the two couſins joined purſes, to entertain us at their mutual expence. Literally ſpeaking, the girls were cloathed in rags; and, our propoſal to make them a preſent of ſome cloaths, was received with tranſport. Ladies, ſays the eldeſt of the couſins, with tears in his eyes, you would ſcarcely believe, you have been in company with gentry, whoſe nobility is as antient as the

time of the earlieſt cruſades. We have preſerved our blood free from mixture, at the expence of all the conveniencies of life, which we have made a ſhift to do without; if we had had fewer children, we could have lived on our trifling income, if not in plenty, at leaſt, in a decent way; too great fruitfulneſs, by obliging us to divide our morſel into too many bits, has rendered our condition very deplorable; yet, however great our diſtreſs, we courageouſly reſiſt the temptation of relieving ourſelves, by means unworthy of us. Some of our relations, leſs delicate, have made a fortune, at which, we bluſh, ſince they owe it to the finances: they offered us the ſame reſource for our ſons; but, we could not deſcend ſo low; and the only favour we have aſked of them, has been to place ſome of our daughters in the royal abbeys, where young ladies are received, without paying any penſion. They have procured two vacancies for each of us, which will be ſome little aſſiſtance; and, they have promiſed, to get two of our boys into the Military Academy.

Clariſſa applauded every thing, even the ridiculous delicacy of theſe honeſt gentlemen; and, as ſoon as ſhe found an opportunity,

ſounded

ſounded the vocation of the four victims, who were deſigned for the cloiſters. They had no other beſides hunger; and one of them, told her with tears, that, if it had not been through fear of her father's anger, ſhe ſhould have found means of ceaſing to be a charge to him, by marrying the ſon of a rich farmer, by whom ſhe was beloved; but, added ſhe, he would kill me, if he only knew I had ever thought of ſuch a thing. Therefore, I ſhall obey him, whatever I ſuffer; for I deteſt a convent; my only conſolation will be, the hopes of ſoon finiſhing there a wretched life——She ſtopped at theſe words, and Clariſſa finiſhed the ſentence—thro' grief for the loſs of your lover. Bluſh not to own it to me; I will be your friend, and do you all the ſervice in my power. She made much of her, and learned from her, that her ſiſter and her two couſins were in the ſame ſituation; but, that they would never forgive her, if they knew ſhe had betrayed them. Don't be afraid, ſaid our child, only leave the management of your affairs to me, and all will go well. The very ſame day, ſhe tried to gain the confidence of the parents, and invited them to return our viſit. She afterwards ſaid to the gentlemen, your two eldeſt daughters ſeem to have very good underſtandings, and will certainly ſucceed, in whatever

ſtation you place them in. Yet, I beg permiſſion to make one remark. Speak, Madam, ſaid they. Your daughters, I repeat it, are charming; but, they are to enter into a ſociety of nuns, brought up in the great world; and theſe young ladies are baſhful; truſt them to madam d'Aſtie till their departure; they will acquire with us a free eaſy way; and will, on that account, be better looked on in the abbeys where you deſign to place them. This propoſal was accepted with thanks; mantua-makers were ſent for to the neighbouring town, to fit the linnen ſacks to their ſhapes; my daughter and I worked at their head dreſſes; and, in fact, theſe poor girls were hardly to be known in their new dreſs. Their parents were extremely thankful, and conſented to accompany us, in our return, with their wives. Till my daughter's arrival, I had made no noiſe, except in our own village, and theſe good people hardly knew my name. Clariſſa's cloaths had cauſed a rumour, which ſpread thirty miles round about; they could not comprehend the cauſe of the ſimplicity of her dreſs, and her choice of a village for her reſidence. They were ſtill more ſurprized at the plainneſs of our furniture; and concluded therefrom, that our riches had been exaggerated. As ſhe had not ſaid a word of her birth; and, as they

they thought it impoſſible to be ſilent on an article which ſeemed to them of ſuch importance, when a perſon was really of a noble family; they concluded ſhe was the daughter of ſome rich merchant, who had fell in love with my ſon, and through complaiſance to me, dreſſed after my manner. They ventured to aſk ſome queſtions on this head, and were quite aſtoniſhed, when they found Clariſſa was a young lady of family, and poſſeſſed at preſent above eleven hundred pounds a year; and would have an immenſe fortune at her father's death, who was a knight and baronet. She ſurprized them ſtill more, by telling them, that in England, a man was valued according to his actions, and not according to his birth; that the ſon of a lord, or a miniſter of ſtate, was not diſhonoured by entering into commerce; that a good honeſt farmer ranked with gentlemen, and was admitted to the tables of peers, though his family had not the leaſt pretenſions to nobility; in ſhort, that high nobility was revered there; but was not thought ſtained, when, to repair the accidents of fortune, thoſe who poſſeſſed it ſubmitted to ſome profeſſion, provided it was an uſeful one to the ſtate, and they exerciſed it honourably. Our gentlemen at firſt thought theſe cuſtoms ſtrange: and afterwards lamented the prejudice

that

that prevailed in France in this reſpect, which condemned them to die in miſery. In ſhort, before the day was over, ſhe convinced them, that every prejudice, which rendered uſeleſs men born to ſerve the ſtate, was ridiculous and criminal, and ought to be ſhook off by a noble ſoul; and, that to ſet an example thereof, ſhe had reduced herſelf to the ſtation of a farmer's wife. This condition, ſhe told them, was not debaſing, ſince it was that of our primitive anceſtors. Abraham, who was conſidered as a prince, was nevertheleſs, only a ſhepherd; Jacob, his grandſon, was a ſervant to his uncle; in ſhort, ſhe proved by twenty inſtances, that he who is of ſervice to the ſtate, is ſuperior to the uſeleſs noble. I am ſenſible, ſays Mr. de Ferſal, (one of theſe gentlemen) that he who can ſerve his king and country, is unworthy the name of a gentleman, if he refuſes to do it through love of eaſe, or fear of danger; but, added he, children like ours, whatever deſire they may have to ſerve their country, are under an impoſſibility of doing it. A fortune is neceſſary to maintain a gentleman in the ſervice, and they are abſolutely deſtitute of any.

Alas! do you think, ſaid Clariſſa, that your king and country, do not want labourers, as well

well as ſoldiers? What would become of the laſt, were it not for the firſt? War is made only to ſecure ſubjects the peaceable enjoyment of the fruits which the huſbandman procures. My huſband, ſhe added, ſhall imitate the ancient Romans, who, at one time bore arms, and at another, diſdained not to cultivate their little eſtate, the inheritance of their anceſtors. They feared not to commit the fate of the republic into the hands of one Cincinnatus, who was found at plough, when the enſigns of the dictatorſhip were brought him. This great man, conqueror almoſt as ſoon as armed, returned with eagerneſs to his rural employments. Abdolonim, of the family of the kings of Sydon, became a gardener, and was found at work in his garden, when news was brought him, that Alexander reſtored him to his crown.

Neither have we ever diſdained rural employments, replied Ferfal; but, the ſmallneſs of our eſtate puts it out of our power to employ our children in a manner more ſuitable to their birth; and, as this is an evil which cannot be remedied, we muſt ſubmit, and bury our name in all its native purity. Determined to end the number of wretched beings, which an unhappy fruitfulneſs in our children, would multiply to infinity,

nfinity, we are thoroughly reſolved never to conſent to the marriage of any of them; for there is little probability, that a young lady of equal rank, who is rich, ſhould think of raiſing our family again; every one muſt not expect to meet with ſuch good fortune as the baron d'Aſtio has done.

This expreſſion was extremely rude, and, I bluſhed at it, for my ſon; he pretended not to underſtand it, and reſuming the diſcourſe with the utmoſt coolneſs, you are in the right, Sir, ſays he, few people can expect a happineſs like mine; but, know, that I don't think this happineſs conſiſts in the nobility and immenſe fortune of my wife. Had ſhe been born a ſhepherdeſs, and had her anceſtors ſince Noah never been of any other profeſſion, I would have choſe and preferred her to a princeſs, who poſſeſſed not her virtues. I acknowledge, replied Ferfal, that the virtues of your wife are ſufficient to juſtify a miſ-alliance; yet, I don't think it right to miſ-ally one's ſelf; and, I ſhould never forgive my children if they were to be guilty of a fault of this kind.

I am entirely of your opinion, Sir, ſays I; but we don't mean the ſame thing by an improper

per alliance. To make an improper alliance, is to marry a woman of a bad character, or one who comes of a family diſhonoured by vice. I conſider as a gentleman, the man only who poſſeſſes truly noble ſentiments; and, I ſhould think my ſon very badly allied, if he had married ſuch a perſon, though her nobility had been as antient as the times of Pharamond. Every man virtuous in a ſuperior degree, is worthy of being noble, and is ſo in my eyes.

I ſhall not repeat all the arguments we uſed in trio, before we could get the better of the wretched prejudice of theſe poor folks; and what is very ſingular, the women held out a great while after the men were convinced. I have ſaid this was ſingular, but it is not ſo in the leaſt; and, with ſubmiſſion to lady Harriet, a fooliſh woman is four times more ſilly than a man, and obſtinacy is always in proportion to ignorance and folly. We let four days paſs, to confirm our proſelytes in their new ſentiments; and, in ſpite of the progreſs, they imagined they had made in their new philoſophy, they were ready to revolt, when we informed them we could ſettle four of their daughters, who had not the leaſt inclination for a religious life, which they were, notwithſtanding, reſolved to embrace,

embrace, if we could not induce them to compaſſionate their caſe. My ſon, ſince our firſt interview, had ſeen the farmer, whoſe two ſons were in love with two of theſe young ladies.

The other two were beloved by their couſins; who not having a large portion to offer like the farmer's ſons, were quite in deſpair. My ſon raiſed their ſpirits. Clariſſa had a mind to make them the firſt inhabitants of a plantation ſhe had projected; and give them wherewithal to live there. The baron found the farmer very tractable; his ſons had threatened him to enliſt themſelves in the army, if he did not conſent to their marriage; and, as they were his only ſons, for it is not uſual with us, to ſet any great value on girls; the good man had given them leave to do as they thought proper. It came into the baron's head, to propoſe to him one of Ferfal's ſons for his third child, who was a very genteel young woman. You would have me then left alone, and abandoned in my old age, ſays the honeſt man, with tears in his eyes. Quite the contrary, ſays my ſon, embracing him. Your farm is lonely, and ſtands by itſelf; our deſign is to ſurround it with an hamlet, of which you will be the head and the father, ſince your three children ſhall be

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the firſt inhabitants. God bleſs you, and all your undertakings, replied the farmer; but, I am very much afraid my daughters-in-law and ſon-in-law will deſpiſe me. The two gentlemen, my neighbours, are very good kind of people, but they are haughty; indeed, if they reſembled you, I would on my knees beg of them their daughters, and offer mine, who has had a very good education in a convent; as to my ſons, they know how to read and write, that's all; they never till now gave me any cauſe to complain of them. And they will never give you cauſe again, ſays my ſon; leave the management of this affair to me. With all my heart, replies the old man; I have pretty near fifteen hundred pounds in ready money, I will ſhare it equally between my three children; and, if I don't die very ſoon, they may expect more. We don't deſire ſo much of you, ſays my ſon; you ought not to ſtrip yourſelf quite, you ſhould keep ſomething to reward thoſe children, who, by their reſpectful behaviour ſhall deſerve it beſt. The peaſant was charmed with my ſon's care to ſecure his future felicity, and left him abſolute maſter to act as he pleaſed.

As this had paſſed before our laſt interview with the gentlemen, we offered on the farmer's

part three hundred and fifty pounds for each of his ſons immediately; and, we agreed, that each of the ſons-in-law ſhould make a preſent of twenty guineas to his father-in-law, in order to reconcile theſe gentlemens wives to the matches. I took this opportunity to propoſe the farmer's daughter as a match for one of their ſons, whom ſhe ſhould prefer before the reſt; and every thing was preſently ſettled. As it ſtill wants ſeven months of the time fixed for marriages in our pariſh, we have uudertaken to take care of the girls till then; and we require their future huſbands to be aſſiduous, during the whole of this time, to the inſtructions of our paſtors. Our three gentlemen certainly have more occaſion for this laſt clauſe than the farmer's ſons, for they are ſtupidly ignorant. We promiſe the parents to take four more of their daughters, as ſoon as theſe are married; we already have views about them, which pleaſe God will in time be accompliſhed. Here then is a new hamlet, which we are going to eſtabliſh, madam; we only want a clergyman like thoſe God has beſtowed on us already, to watch over this future habitation. Our paſtors would willingly ſacrifice a part of their revenues, to enable him to live comfortably: ſee, madam, whether you cannot procure us ſuch a perſon.

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All thoſe who are educated at St. Sulpice, are perſons of excellent principles; their worthy ſuperiors might find ſome one who would ſuit, if you would be kind enough to explain our plan to them. I reckon the days with impatience, till the time arrives that I ſhall have the honour to poſſeſs you, and return you thanks for being the mother of a daughter, who conſtitutes my whole happineſs. I am as much obliged to you for it, as if it had been in your power not to have been ſo. My reſpects, if you pleaſe, to lady Harriet: ſhall we never have the pleaſure of ſeeing her?

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LETTER XLVI.

CLARISSA TO LADY HARRIET.

OH my God! my dear Harriet, I was eaſy and merry, at a time when I was threatened with the greateſt misfortune that could poſſibly happen to me. At reading our mother's letter, which informed me of your dangerous ſituation, I was as greatly ſhocked, as I ſhould have been to have ſeen you in ſuch extreme danger. Do not imagine, my fears and anguiſh were for yourſelf; no; death ſeems to me ſtripped of all its horrors, when I have reaſon to think it only the beginning of a better life; it was for myſelf I wept, for Mr. Balfour, for us all. My thankſgivings to the Lord, for his goodneſs in preſerving a perſon ſo dear to me, have been proportionable to the value I ſet on the favour he has beſtowed. This is telling you, that I never returned thanks ſo heartily before. I was exactly in the ſame ſituation, when you acquainted me with my mother's reſurrection. I think theſe two ſentences expreſs every thing. You are ſenſible I am quite a novice in theſe matters; I had never ſeen any body in your ſituation till I came here; and our women get through it ſo eaſily, that I was deceived with

reſpect to what you had to ſuffer. Ah! if you are ever again in the ſame way, come, come, my dear ſiſter, come and partake the benediction which God ſhowers down here on the daughters of Eve; they only ſuffer enough to fulfil the menace of the Almighty. Does he moderate their pains in proportion to the innocence of their lives? They would have ſuffered nothing in the terreſtial paradiſe, and this place recalls the idea of it; for to eat our bread with the ſweat of our brow, to us ſeems leſs an evil, than a remedy againſt vice, wearineſs, and diſcontent, the conſequences of an idle luxurious life. My mother-in-law, who is much better ſkilled in theſe matters than our mother, aſſures me, that I ſhall have an eaſy and happy delivery; and I rely on her promiſes.

The ſpring begins to reſtore to our labourers all their former activity: the hamlet of chriſtian union ſeems to riſe above the earth; the walls only were built; and in a week, almoſt every thing has been nearly finiſhed. The hamlet of the *family* is begun, which is the name we have given to that which is to be built half way between the farm and our gentlemens houſes, exactly where our pariſh ends. If God gives a bleſſing to our intentions, ſoon this vaſt territory,

tory, on which not a ſingle houſe could be ſeen, will become one continued village: we may labour a great while before we want land, and the overplus of our hands will produce manufactures. A great lord, to whom I propoſe to pay my reſpects ſoon, poſſeſſes here an eſtate four leagues in circumference, and ſacrifices this great extent of ground, to the pleaſure of coming here to hunt ten or twelves times in the autumn. What a ſhame! This land might maintain ſeveral thouſand men, and is made the dwelling place of a thouſand hares, which, not ſatisfied with this vaſt poſſeſſion, deſtroy and ravage every thing, which has the misfortune to be planted or cultivated on the frontiers of their empire. The unhappy peaſant, almoſt diſtracted to ſee the hopes of his harveſt, and the fruits of a whole year's labour deſtroyed in a moment, muſt ſtifle his ſighs and complaints, leſt he ſhould be taken up by the game-keepers; but if he ſhould unfortunately kill one of theſe hares, the galleys are talked of. What tyranny! Surely theſe lords, who ſet ſo little value on whatever does not relate to themſelves, muſt have bowels of iron. Do they imagine that all nature ſhould labour for them alone! Theſe are, ſay they gravely, the prerogatives of our birth and fortune. What dreadful and horrid

rogatives are these, which give a right to be cruel, barbarous, and unjust! Oh, I will, if necessary, throw myself at the feet of this man, and say to him:

Sir, I come to propose to you a pleasure worthy of a nobleman, of a king, in return for the trifling amusement which this immense warren procures you; you divert yourself with seeing your hares among the bushes; permit me to change the scene, to diversify the picture, to augment your glory, and even your revenue. Confine your hares into any fixed compass you please, if you cannot resolve to part with them entirely; we will fence them in if you require it; leave us the residue of this uncultivated land; suffer us to employ our sweat and labour, to render it fertile. You shall soon see rise from the earth a new race, who shall lisp out your name which their parents have taught them to bless. You shall be the father of these new families, who will owe their existence to you: you will see them increase before your eyes; they will multiply your vassals, and those of your children. I ask this favour in the name of the Most High, who has not created the earth for the pleasure of some few, but for the use of mankind in general.

A colony planted in the middle of the plain, will proclaim to future ages, that Lord ſuch an one, ennobled as much by his virtues as his birth, was capable of facrificing one of his pleaſures for the benefit of mankind. If this effort ſeems difficult and painful to you, you will partake the heroic glory of triumphing over yourſelf. All eyes are fixed on you: how many perſons who are your inferiors, will think themſelves obliged to follow your example! I behold, on all ſides, the flames devour theſe uſeleſs plants; and the earth enriched with their cinders, produce the more plentiful crops, on account of its having been always uncultivated. We are eager to find iſlands in the new world at a great expence, France is depopulated to people theſe climates; and we have, in the very centre of the kingdom, deſert places which might be rendered fertile. What new ſources of plenty does your example open to your country! Prefer the glory of a legiſlator, of a creator, to uſe the expreſſion, to that of a great and powerful man, of a conqueror, of a rich man. Redeem your ſins by this good work: at the hour of death, when every thing leaves you, it will be your conſolation and joy, and the foundation of your hope.

Do you think, my dear, there can exiſt a being hard hearted enough to reſiſt theſe juſt conſiderations? For my part, I cannot believe it; and I ſhould think myſelf criminal, if I reſiſted the impulſe which moves me to prompt him to this good work. Adieu, my dear Harriet, I leave off to read the account my huſband has promiſed you, which he has juſt finiſhed; tho' I have ſeen it by bits, I am very deſirous of reviſing it altogether: it is a true confeſſion, I acquaint you beforehand.

LETTER XLVII.

From the Baron D'ASTIE to Lady HARRIET.

MADAM,

WHILE I only viewed it at a diſtance, I imagined I had courage ſufficient to perform the painful taſk which you impoſed on me. At the time of execution, my courage fails me. I pretend to your friendſhip, to your eſteem; and how can I flatter myſelf ever to poſſeſs either, when I have ſhewn you how little I deſerve theſe ſentiments? In fact, if I had this confeſſion to write over again, I am afraid I ſhould be guilty of palliating ſome circumſtances, that I might appear leſs culpable to you. However great my faults have been, I nevertheleſs think them cancelled, if it is ſufficient to have bewailed them with tears of blood, to uſe the expreſſion. No, nothing can ſurpaſs my repentance. God ſeems to have forgot them, madam; and I flatter myſelf, you will not remember them, and puniſh me for my obedience. Before I can proceed to this humiliating confeſſion, I am forced to refer to the time which preceded my exiſtence. What aggravates my fault is, my ſcorn and contempt of the example and counſel

counſel of a mother, who has always imitated the virtues of her anceſtors; I am perhaps the firſt of my family, who, for a long ſeries of ages, has ſhewn himſelf unworthy of the blood from whence he ſprung.

The Hiſtory of the Baroneſs D'ASTIE.

MY anceſtors did not always live in ſuch poverty as that in which my great grandfather left his ſon; but this poverty proceeded from a glorious cauſe, ſince it was owing to his loyalty to his king, which he preſerved at a time when every one embraced the party which coincided beſt with his intereſts, and this alone cauſed the ruin of his eſtate. My grandfather finding it out of his power to maintain himſelf in the ſervice, confined his whole ambition to cultivate alternatively his little eſtate, the ſciences, and his only daughter's education, whoſe mother died as ſoon as ſhe was born. I ſhall not take notice that ſhe was a perfect beauty; I hope, madam, you will be a judge of it ſome time or other yourſelf. Notwithſtanding her trouble and laborious employments, ſhe yet preſerves ſo great a ſhare, that few women are to be compared to her. This beauty may be conſidered as the ſource of all her misfortunes, if

that name may be given to accidents, which have conducted her to perfection and happineſs: ſhe lived tranquilly in retirement and poverty, when the arrierban was publiſhed to aſſemble the nobility.

Fancy, madam, the extreme miſery of a man, who has no more to ſubſiſt himſelf and daughter on than ſeven guineas a year, and who could not even depend upon that without procuring it by the ſweat of his brow, and aſſiduous labour. Such was my grandfather's ſituation. He might have found a reſource in the poverty even of his neighbours; he was adored in the village; and there were none but would have looked on his acceptance of a part of their neceſſaries, as a favour done them: he received, with thankfulneſs, the ſincere offers of theſe poor people, without being tempted to take an advantage of them: his maxim was, that a real gentleman ſhould beſtow with pleaſure, but never receive, except when the refuſal of a favour might endanger his life. The ſale of his trifling patrimony might pay his daughter's penſion in a convent, and fit himſelf out to ſerve his maſter; he therefore reſolved to ſacrifice it. Alas! this reſource failed him, and being obliged to appear at Bourdeaux without delay, he was forced to pre-

ſent himſelf there in the equipage of a beggar. Being repulſed at the door of the intendant's office, he had the utmoſt difficulty to get to the intendant's antichamber, who, coming out of his apartment, enquired of his ſervants why they ſuffered that wretch to come up: then turning towards him, ſaid, What do you want, honeſt man? I have appeared to the ſummons, replied my grandfather, firmly. My name is D. B. and I come to offer my king the remains of a blood, accuſtomed for many ages to be ſpilt for its country. This name was too well known not to ſtrike the intendant: he ſaluted my grandfather, begged pardon for his miſtake, took him by the hand, conducted him into his cloſet, and generouſly offered him his purſe, to equip himſelf in a more decent manner. Sir, replied my grandfather, I do not refuſe your aſſiſtance; I have ſought a reſource from the ſale of my very ſmall patrimony, but not finding an opportunity to diſpoſe of it, I am deſirous of mortgaging it; and ſhall regard, as an eſſential ſervice, the acquiſition you make of it: on this condition, I thankfully receive your generous offer. You are ſenſible, a gentleman cannot, with decency, receive favours but from his king. It is from him that I make you this offer, replied the intendant, amazed at his diſintereſt-

ednefs. Yet, in compliance with your delicacy, I undertake to difpofe of your eftate for you very advantageoufly; in the mean while, I hope you will accept of my houfe and table. Permit me to introduce you to my wife; fhe knows how to honour virtue, under whatever form it appears; do me the favour to accompany me to her apartment.

Haughtinefs is the only refource of a noble mind, when endeavours are ufed to crufh it. When we ceafe trying to humiliate it, a noble mind returns to its natural ftate, and thinks it a duty to return more politenefs than has been received; for pride is a neceffary ingredient, when properly applied. My grandfather therefore laid afide his haughtinefs which he had aflumed, to fupply the place of an equipage fuitable to his birth: and replied to the intendant's politenefs, like a perfon who was not born in the ftation in which he appeared to be, and feemed neither humbled nor elevated at being placed at his table in fuch an indifferent drefs. The intendant's wife was a lady of extraordinary merit; and having learnt that Mr. D. B. had left behind in his cottage a daughter about fifteen years of age, defired, as a favour, he would permit her to take care of her at her own houfe,

during

during his abſence: ſhe ſoon loved this young lady as well as if ſhe had been her own daughter. The peace, which ſoon followed, permitting the gentlemen who were aſſembled for the arrierban to return home, ſhe prevailed on my grandfather to leave his daughter in her care; and, as his expences at Bourdeaux had almoſt conſumed the whole of his little fortune, the intendant procured him a gratification from court, which enabled him to augment it to its preſent value.

It was at this intendant's houſe, that the baron d'Aſtie ſaw my mother: he enjoyed a fortune which enabled him to diſregard the want of one in a wife, and thought himſelf happy to obtain her hand. I was the only fruit of this marriage; and my mother, who by the change of her condition did not forget the great principles of virtue ſhe had imbibed in her youth, would not truſt to any one the care of inculcating them in me. I loſt my father when I was entering my ninth year; and, as there never was a more tender father or huſband, none was ever more regretted. My grandfather died ſoon after, and theſe ſucceſſive loſſes were in danger of cauſing another. Maternal love, to uſe the expreſſion, performed a miracle in my favour, and with-

held the ſoul of my mother, which was almoſt on the wing to follow what was moſt dear to her in this world.

Reſolved to ſurmount in my favour, her exceſſive grief, madam d'Aſtie renounced every thing which might take her attention from the care ſhe propoſed to beſtow on me; and retired to a very fine eſtate of my father's, where ſhe propoſed to paſs the remainder of her days in retirement, when a piece of injuſtice, which could not be foreſeen, obliged her to return to the world.

A ſteward who had lived eighteen years in my grandfather's ſervice, by my father's ſide, produced, of a ſudden, an account, by which his maſter owed him near three thouſand pounds, money advanced at different times. As the debt, which he produced, bore intereſt, it amounted to double the firſt mentioned ſum; and he inſiſted on being paid the whole. It was notoriouſly clear that the deed, on which this man founded his demand, was a forgery; it was, however, neceſſary to convict him of this, and commence a ſuit: whatever averſion my mother had for going to law, ſhe was my guardian, and could not in conſcience abandon my

my intereſt; ſhe therefore, courageouſly entered into this career, ſo thorny, and diſagreeable to a perſon of her diſpoſition. To heighten the miſfortune, my deceaſed father had ſeveral relations and friends in the parliament of Bourdeaux; they were excepted againſt, by our adverſaries; and the cauſe was moved to the parliament of Tholouſe; where, after three years proceedings, in ſpite of our utmoſt endeavours to convict our adverſary of forgery; the judges, though ſatisfied themſelves of the juſtice of our cauſe, were at length, obliged to give judgment againſt us, according to the letter of the law; and we loſt our ſuit with coſts.

I had accompanied my mother to Tholouſe; and was witneſs of the incredible trouble this unhappy affair gave her. I ſet up a ſhout of joy, when I ſaw it finiſhed; preferring the poverty to which we were about to be reduced, to the fear of her ruining her health, which I valued beyond all riches. It was to her I was indebted for this fortitude, ſhe had herſelf ſet me the example. She uttered no complaints againſt her judges; nor did a ſingle reproach, againſt the raviſhers of my fortune, eſcape her lips. God knows, ſays ſhe, embracing me, what is beſt for you; think, without heſitation, my ſon,

that you would have made a bad uſe of what you have loſt; the chriſtian fortitude he inſpires us with, is infinitely more valuable than the greateſt treaſures. He gives us more than he has taken away, and, theſe are bleſſings, which are beyond the reach of the injuſtice of man. He reſtores us to the humble retired induſtrious life of our anceſtors; and, though he is the author of our patience and ſubmiſſion, he will recompenſe us an hundred fold, even in this life, if conſiſtent with his glory and our ſalvation.

Oh! truly heroic woman, you were then inſpired. God, by your mouth, declared the inеſtimable bleſſings he deſigned me; and which, I ſhould never have arrived to, by any other way. Yes, madam, to the loſs of this law ſuit I owe my Clariſſa; it is, at leaſt, the firſt origin of my happineſs; but, can I recollect without horror at it has alſo been, through my fault, the occaſion of the ill conduct, which I ſhall never ceaſe to bewail, during life, though divine mercy has changed the poiſon into a remedy. My mother's courage and tranquility under ſuch an heavy ſtroke, heightened the admiration her beauty had excited. Several lovers paid their addreſſes; but, faithful to my father's

aſhes, ſhe was not moved by their advantageous offers, and was preparing for her departure, when ſhe received information of a viſit from her adverſary.

Her firſt determination was to refuſe to ſee him; and would to God ſhe had kept this reſolution. She reproached herſelf for it, and fearing to preſerve the leaſt ſpark of reſentment againſt a man whom ſhe had ſo much reaſon to hate, received him with a politeneſs that muſt have confounded him. He was accompanied by a girl about two years older than myſelf; ſhe certainly was not a beauty; and, at preſent, when I coolly recollect the features which ſubdued me then, I clearly perceive ſhe was hardly indifferently handſome: at this moment ſhe appeared to me quite charming. You will be aſtoniſhed, that a lad not thirteen years of age, ſhould be ſuſceptible of a tender paſſion. Alas, madam! indifferent to all other bleſſings, a romance which I had read above a year before, unknown to my mother, had taught me that I had an heart; and, that I could only be happy or miſerable thro' this heart. The paſſion I conceived at this time for Roſella, which was the girl's name, was, perhaps, more the effect of a deſire to love, and want of an object, than of an impreſſion; and, without I had happened

to have read this romance, would doubtleſs have been attended with no conſequences. The diſcourſe of her father finiſhed what my inclinations had began. Madam, ſays he, to my mother, you ſee at your feet, the moſt unhappy of mankind; (and he had, indeed, thrown himſelf at her feet.) My duty to this child, whom I love entirely, has not permitted me to liſten to the ſentiments of my reſpectful attachment to your family. I was a long while ſilent about the ſums that were owing me; and, if I had remained childleſs, I ſhould have rather choſe to die in middling circumſtances, than ſtrip the grandſon of my maſter, from whom I have received a thouſand teſtimonies of his goodneſs. Judge, madam, of my veneration for his memory, by the propoſal which I have the boldneſs to make to you. I know the nature of the deceaſed Mr. d'Aſtie's fortune; what he has left will ſcarcely ſuffice to pay what is due to me; and, I cannot think, without trembling, on the ſad fate you and your ſon are on the point of undergoing. I come to offer you all the recompenſe in my power; if you will conſent to the marriage of Mr. d'Aſtie with my daughter, ſhe ſhall bring him for a fortune, the whole eſtate, which a juſt decree has deprived him of. I am ſenſible ſhe is deſcended from an obſcure family; but,

but, her charms and fortune give her a right to except every thing; and she would already have been placed in a rank superior to what I ask of you for her, if I had not preferred the delicate pleasure of making the fortune of my master's grandson, to the marrying her to a man as rich as she is herself, from the cession of the whole of my fortune.

During this discourse, my mother's face was as red as scarlet, and she felt the utmost indignation, so that it was easy to foresee the answer she would make; and without yet well knowing what passed in my soul, I could not help trembling at the apprehension of it. She was, however, more moderate than this wretch could have expected, so great was her command of her passions. Sir, says she to him, I wish the proposal you have presumed to make me, had remorse for its principle; and, had I the power to engage my son, to sacrifice the estate, which you unjustly withhold from him, I should think this sacrifice inconsiderable, if it could obtain you, from God, a sincere repentance. This wish, christian charity obliged me to form in your favour. But the most cruel extremity shall never force me to consent to an union, which, I think debasing. If you were only of low birth, I could get the better

better of the prejudice which forbids improper alliances, in favour of your generosity, in seeking the alliance of my son, when ruined beyond resource. Do yourself justice, Sir, and say to yourself what I spare your ears the hearing of. Were you a prince, I would refuse you my son, if you were capable of a crime which you would repair with another. I pray Heaven to pardon you, as I forgive you, I repeat it again; and, it is less for my son's interest than your own, that I warn you, that the restitution you would have made us, does not in the least discharge your conscience from the obligation of doing it in another manner.

You are wanting in respect to your judges, replied this wretch, raising himself from the ground, with a furious air. You dare accuse them of injustice, and me of robbery? Tremble for the effects of my just resentment; and, since you reject my goodness, expect every thing from my hatred.

These words suspended the growing inclination I felt for the daughter of so guilty a father; and, notwithstanding my youth, I know not whether he would have escaped my resentment, if he had not immediately ridded us of his odious presence.

preſence. Yet, I eſſayed to engage my mother not to confound the daughter, who was innocent, with her guilty father: by the warmth, with which I defended her, my mother perceived what a riſk I ſhould run, if I ſaw her again; and haſtened her deſign of removing me from a place, where my virtue, yet weak, had been in danger. The new employments, to which I was forced to ſubmit, ſoon weakened an impreſſion, which had only been proportionate to my age; notwithſtanding, there always remained a tender remembrance of this young perſon; which was, as it were, the ſeed of the violent paſſion ſhe inſpired me with, in the ſequel. I was never able to comprehend her in the juſt contempt which I had for her father, who forgot nothing he thought capable of doing us an injury; and extended to the higheſt pitch, the indignation with which the judges already beheld him, by the endeavours he uſed to poiſon the few words my mother had ſpoke.

I ſhall not repeat what paſt during the firſt years of our abode in the country; my dear Clariſſa has already acquainted you with it; I ſhall only add, I have reaſon to be convinced, that the cauſe of premature exceſſes, is to be ſought for, only in the idleneſs, in which, young people

are

are ſuffered to remain. I am, unhappily, born with the moſt lively paſſions: I had ſcarcely time to be ſenſible of this, my time was divided between ſtudy and labour; I knew no other recreation than the diverſity of my exerciſes; a ſenſible converſation, or works of charity. A day ſo employed, to me ſeemed ſhort; I had not time ſufficient for what I wanted to do; and, to make uſe of a trite expreſſion, but which is too true, not to deſerve to be preferred before every other: The devil could not have found a moment to tempt me.

If my mother had conſulted only her own inclination, ſhe would not have wiſhed me any greater happineſs than what I then taſted. In the mean while, ſhe ſaw the time draw near, when I ſhould want a companion choſe for me: our village offered to her choice, amiable, diſcreet, virtuous young women; but, though ſhe was ſenſible of the neceſſity of ſacrificing prejudice to my happineſs, ſuppoſing I had taken a liking to any one of them, ſhe thought it her duty to ſpare no pains to prevent ſuch a ſtep. By inculcating every day, that true nobility, conſiſted in virtue alone; ſhe, at the ſame time inſinuated, that thoſe, in whom both theſe advantages were found, could not be too much reſpected;

reſpected; that a girl of a good family, had generally, a better education than one ſprung from the dregs of the people; that it was the deſign of Providence, for perſons to match themſelves with their equals; and that circumſtances which very ſeldom happened, were neceſſary to juſtify a deviation from this rule. Theſe repeated leſſons, uttered as if without deſign, inſenſibly made an impreſſion on me, and preſerved me from the danger of allying myſelf with any of thoſe amongſt whom I lived. I was, notwithſtanding, in a ſituation which did not permit me to expect a ſuitable alliance; my mother, therefore, thought it her duty to endeavour to change it.

My ſon, ſays ſhe, when I had compleated my eighteenth year, you have not ſeen me murmur in the leaſt, againſt the order of Providence, when it conſigned us to this ſolitude. I even own, that hardly any condition of life, would to me be preferable to this which you lead here; and that, if it belonged to me, to deſire or chuſe one for you, I ſhould confine my whole ambition to this. But, as it is requiſite, that God alone ſhould place us according to his deſigns, I ſhould be afraid of encroaching on his right, by keeping you longer with me. You muſt

ſound

ſound your own heart, in order to find its determinate reſolution. I ſaved ſome jewels from the wreck of our fortune; which I ſold for a thouſand crowns, and have placed this ſum in the hands of a merchant at Bourdeaux. The capital, at preſent, amounts to ſomething more; and, I have deſtined this ſum towards finiſhing your education. If you have any particular inclination, either for the army or the gown, I ſhall conſider this inclination, as the beginning of your vocation, and will ſacrifice every thing, to put you in a condition to follow it. Take eight days to conſider of what I propoſe; conſult with Mr. Dubac the younger; he thoroughly knows your diſpoſition; I ſhall blindly ſubſcribe to whatever you determine upon together; and, on my part, ſhall pray to the Lord to enlighten you.

I obeyed my mother; and after having well weighed the duties of every ſtate, which might be proper for me, I found none more excellent, or more noble, than that in which God had placed me. To ſoften the manners of theſe ſimple men; who, in return for the bread, with which they furniſh the ungrateful citizens, are deſpiſed by them as vile ſlaves; to learn them to ſanctify their poverty and their labours;

to

to perform to them the reſpectable offices of a father, comforter, ſupporter, friend, and peace maker: can I aſpire to a more excellent calling? I applaud, ſaid my mother, the deſign you have to finiſh your days in the laudable employments, in which you have already paſt the early part of your life; but, my dear child, you know no other condition than this; perhaps, your diſguſt for others is only founded on your ignorance of the advantages they may procure you. To remove all my doubts on this head, I think it neceſſary that you ſhould try ſome other way of life. Among my remaining friends at Bourdeaux, I reckon a lawyer of undoubted probity. His delicacy has not ſuffered him to puſh his fortune ſo far as moſt part of his brethren; beſides, being burthened with a numerous family, neceſſity, as well as inclination, has engaged him to ſeparate himſelf from the great world, where one is expoſed to an expence, which equally impairs our ſalvation, health, and fortune; ſo that there your innocence and morals will be ſafe. I am told he has ſeveral very amiable daughters; I ſhould be charmed if your heart choſe one of them. During this year you ſhall try your inclination for the bar. If you perſevere in preferring your firſt way of life, you ſhall return with the companion of your life,

and

and acquire a new means of ſerving our poor, by preventing diſputes that may ariſe, and by deciding between them, conformable to the laws of this province, which you ſhall particularly ſtudy. But, if your inclination alters, I ſhall ſpare nothing to ſupport you in the profeſſion you wiſh to purſue, and, in which, I hope to ſee you make a rapid progreſs, provided you continue to fear and ſerve the Lord. Remember frequently theſe words of the prophet: Unleſs the lord buildeth the houſe, it ſhall not ſtand firmly. Let him then be the architect of your ſtate, whatever it be. Depend more on his aſſiſtance, than on your own talents and application; he never abandons thoſe who put their truſt in him; and, as beſt ſuits his deſigns, extends or contracts their lights.

You will, doubtleſs, be ſurprized at the hopes my mother entertained of ſeeing me an able lawyer, from my having neglected to inform you, that I had employed the two years I remained at Tholouſe, in purſuing my ſtudies; and that, when I left this city, I wrote, and ſpoke Latin, as fluently as my native language. I was not left to the common methods. An able man, who, willingly complied with my mother's ideas, ſhortened my labour vaſtly.

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She eſteemed learning; yet, frequently ſaid, ſhe would chearfully have given up a knowledge of languages; if to acquire this accompliſhment, I muſt have riſked my morals, and been expoſed to the contagion of colleges. Mr. Duboc finiſhed my education; and few boys of my age had made ſo great a progreſs. Alas! madam, I had made but little, in the ſcience of ſciences, the art of conquering myſelf: you will form a better judgment of this, by the ſequel.

My departure was fixed for the day appointed for carrying our goods to Bourdeaux, and I was to follow the carriage on horſeback. Being tired of this ſlow pace, I told our women I would go on before, and wait for them at the inn to return their horſe. I had breakfaſted in the carriage, and did not propoſe ſtopping again till I arrived at Bourdeaux. About three miles from this town, I felt ſuch an exceſſive hunger, that, not being able to reſiſt it, I ſtopped at an hedge alehouſe to take a little refreſhment. I was going to mount my horſe again, when a very handſome chaiſe ſtopped at the door, to give the miſtreſs of the houſe a little parcel, which the poſtillion had undertaken to deliver to her. Curioſity occaſioned me to look at the lady who was in the chaiſe; and, though

though at the ſight of her, I felt an emotion, of which, I could not conceive the cauſe; in all probability, this rencounter would have been attended with no conſequences, if this lady, viewing me earneſtly in her turn, had not endeavoured to recollect my features. Leſs timid than me, ſhe aſked me, in a tone of voice which charmed me, whether ſhe was miſtaken, in fancying ſhe had ſeen me before. I don't remember to have ever had that honour, madam, replied I; yet, I can't help thinking, your features are not entirely unknown to me; and, if I might believe an emotion, which I never felt but once ------ Ah! you are the baron d'Aſtie, replied ſhe, with tranſport: the place we are in at preſent, is improper for a recollection of one another; but, my houſe is but a very little way off; do me the honour to accompany me there, that we may explain to each other, many circumſtances of conſequence to us both.

You, doubtleſs find me very weak, madam! I thought at this moment of being only polite; or rather, I did not think at all; the emotions of my heart had ſuſpended all the functions of my mind; I was impelled away, ſubdued, and without anſwering a ſingle word, I ſtepped into the chaiſe, the door of which, this lady had ordered

ordered her ſervant to open, and ride my horſe; and, at the ſame time, as if ſhe had been afraid I ſhould eſcape, bid her coachman make all poſſible expedition. Scarcely was I placed by this ſyren's ſide, than I felt a tremor, which ſeemed a preſage of my future misfortunes; and I do not know whether I ſhould not have remained in a ſtupid ſilence, if ſhe had not began with reproaching me, for having ſo entirely forgot her, as not to recollect her name. Some vague words void of meaning, were all my anſwer. I arrived at her houſe, got out of the chaiſe, and preſented her my hand, to aſſiſt her in getting out, as it were mechanically. I endeavoured to forget the remembrance of this name, which ſhe accuſed me of having forgot; and, not being able to ſucceed therein, aſked myſelf, by what enchantment I found myſelf in company with the daughter of my moſt cruel enemy; for you certainly gueſs, madam, that it was Roſella, whoſe fortune and hand had been offered me, whom I met. She was too experienced, to be miſtaken with reſpect to the cauſe of my confuſion; and, however flattering for her charms, ſought to diminiſh it. What ſhall I ſay? My talents and remorſe were unequal to a paſſion, which had got ſuch poſſeſſion of my heart, as to deprive me even of

the deſire of attempting to ſubdue it: ſhutting my eyes againſt the abyſs into which I was about to plunge myſelf, I forgot every thing which religion, honour, and filial tenderneſs, ought to have objected againſt a perſon who did not even endeavour to make me purchaſe her defeat. The new Rinaldo of this dangerous Armida, I loſt at the ſight of her the remembrance of the whole world. She at length recalled me to myſelf, by ſaying, we are not in ſafety here longer than to-morrow; your mother will not delay making an exact ſearch after you. I am too well known at the place where you met me, to flatter myſelf with the poſſibility of eſcaping her enquiries; I ſhall loſe you, and this will break my heart. Ah! replied I, with tranſport, who could tear you from my arms? I would die in your preſence, before I would ſuffer myſelf to be ſeparated from you. Your age, ſays ſhe, ſtill ſubjects you to her tyrannic yoke; I know her implacable hatred to me, and what have I not done to appeaſe it? My father, on his death-bed, commanded me to make you a ſecond offer of my hand and fortune; ſhe rejected both. Alas! of what does ſhe accuſe me? Have I been a party in the perſecution which you have ſuffered? Have I not done all in my power to repair the injury? Doubt not but ſhe will ſoon be acquainted

acquainted with the viſit, that you have made me: a ſuperior order will ſeparate us; and, who can tell how far ſhe will carry her hatred? I will not diſguiſe from you the dangers to which my inconſiderate blind paſſion for you expoſes me. I am older than you, I have ſolicited your hand; I ſhall be accuſed of having ſeduced you; and, if grief for the loſs of you, ſhould not finiſh my wretched life, I ſhall be in danger of loſing it on a ſcaffold; I ſhall be accuſed of a rape.

Ah! I would periſh a thouſand times, ſooner than expoſe you to the leaſt danger, ſaid I: ſpeak, my dear Roſella, I am ready to follow you to the fartheſt part of the univerſe. Let us ſeek an aſylum, in which I may give you the quality of my wife; my mother's tenderneſs for me will prevail over her averſion for the daughter of her enemy. But, if ſhe remains inflexible, we will wait patiently in a foreign country, till the time when the law gives me a right to diſpoſe of myſelf. But, alas! ought you to receive no other fruits of my tenderneſs, than the cruel neceſſity of baniſhing yourſelf?

We do not deſcend gradually into the abyſs of guilt, as you perceive, madam; we roll therein with a ſurprizing rapidity. What a change had

twenty-four hours made in my inclinations! I am aſtoniſhed I did not die with fright, to find myſelf in ſuch a ſhort ſpace of time ſo unlike myſelf. Alas! the kind of intoxication into which I was fallen, ſo ſtupified my ſenſes at firſt, that I felt but little remorſe. But, I payed dear, in the ſequel, for this criminal felicity, which gave me then too much pleaſure to endeavour to undeceive myſelf; the fatal dream laſted but a ſhort time, and my awaking was terrible.

Roſella, ſince her father's death, had lived in the moſt ſcandalous debauchery. This wretched uſurper of my fortune, had in a few years diſſipated the greateſt part thereof: his daughter, brought up in luxury and pleaſure, could not reſolve to renounce it; and had ſought a reſource in libertiniſm. At the time ſhe met me, ſhe had juſt received advice, that the father of a young fellow, whom ſhe had ruined, had obtained an order to confine her: ſhe was, therefore, determined to quit the kingdom; and, was charmed to find a man who was willing to attend her. Nevertheleſs, ſhe loved me at this moment, as well as a woman of her character is capable of loving: but, the ſequel ſhowed, that her ungenerous ſoul, was capable of ſacrificing every thing to eaſe and luxury. Poor, blind wretch that

I was! I looked on her propoſal to abandon every thing for the ſake of following me, as a proof of the moſt perfect love; and, if I had then had it in my power to have diſpoſed of a crown, I ſhould have eſteemed its poſſeſſion only, as it gave me an opportunity of throwing it at her feet. Our departure was fixed for the following night, the time when we ſuppoſed my mother would firſt have an account of my flight; and, though I foreſaw the cruel pains, this tender mother would ſuffer, I had the barbarous courage to ſtifle the cries of nature; and, ſet out, without endeavouring to moderate her grief, by giving her hopes of ſeeing me again ſome time or other. Roſella had already taken meaſures to go to England; and procured paſſports for herſelf and ſervants under fictitious names; yet, I have learnt ſince my return, that we ſhould not have eſcaped the vigilance of the gentleman who had obtained the order for her confinement, if he had not thought it more advantageous for his ſon, to let her quit the kingdom; ſo that we met with no difficulty. We paſſed the night in packing up goods; this wretch, not content with leaving conſiderable debts unpaid, had the baſeneſs to ſtrip the houſe of its beſt furniture; ſuch as India hangings, bed furniture, window curtains, and feather beds. I was innocently an accomplice in this robbery;

I was ignorant that the houſe to which ſhe conducted me, had been hired ready furniſhed; but my ignorance in this reſpect, did not in my opinion, exempt me from the neceſſity of making a reſtitution: and, my firſt care, as ſoon as God opened my eyes, was to intreat my mother to employ for this purpoſe, the money ſhe had placed out for my uſe. Permit me to throw a veil over the remainder of my error; I paſſed ſix months at London quite intoxicated with a paſſion, which ſo engroſſed my attention, that I was incapable of thinking of any thing except my love. At quitting Bourdeaux, Roſella made me promiſe to marry her when we came to London, and I regarded this engagement as the ſeal of my happineſs. Heaven, which was willing to ſave me at the time when I took every ſtep to ruin myſelf, did not permit me to conſummate my ruin, by an alliance with this deteſtable wretch. She eluded, under ſeveral pretences, the offers I frequently made her on this head; ſhe doubtleſs, already premeditated the horrid treachery ſhe was afterwards guilty of; and was afraid of giving me a power over her, which I might claim on ſome future occaſion. As her will was a ſacred order to me, I thought, as ſhe endeavoured to make me believe, that her averſion for the indiſſoluble

diſſoluble tie, proceeded from the delicacy of her paſſion; ſhe feared, ſhe ſaid, leſt marriage ſhould prove the tomb of my love, and not all my proteſtations could chear her up againſt the fear of my coldneſs, which would certainly be her death. Had I been leſs blind, I ſhould have perceived in her the ſymptoms of an inconſtancy, which ſhe pretended to fear from me; ſhe often found pretences for going out without me; the decreaſe of our ſtock, ſhe ſaid, laid her under a neceſſity of cultivating an acquaintance with ſome Bourdeaux merchants who were ſettled at London, through whoſe means ſhe hoped to procure ſome part of her rents; ſhe every day brought me good news on this ſubject; and at laſt, told me, that one of theſe merchants would advance her a conſiderable ſum. This gentleman was in the country, about ſeven miles from London; ſhe had acquainted him of her marriage, and he required a receipt from under my hand for the money. We reſolved therefore, to wait on him the next day. In the night, Roſella complained of a violent cholic, and could not get a wink of ſleep. Alarmed at her illneſs, I conjured her to put off the journey; ſhe told me, in the morning, that ſhe found herſelf ſcarcely able to undertake it, though her pains were abated,

and that ſhe was ſo fatigued as to require reſt; yet, added ſhe, it is of the utmoſt conſequence to us, not to let this affair cool, and I will at all events endeavour to go, unleſs you will yourſelf carry an excuſe to him; I will give you a note to acquaint him of the accident that has happened to me, and will write a receipt for the ſum he is to pay, which he expects you ſhould ſign alſo. I made no other objections to Roſella about this journey, than what her condition furniſhed, and the uneaſineſs I ſhould be in to leave her to the care of a ſervant only. She repeated ſo often, that ſhe was quite recovered, except the fatigue, that I agreed to leave her alone, provided ſhe gave me her word to ſend an expreſs after me, if ſhe found the leaſt return of her diſorder.

I confeſs, madam, I am ſhocked and humbled at the corruption of the human heart, when I recollect the circumſtances of the treachery, of which I was going to be the victim. I had juſt given this infamous creature proofs of the utmoſt tenderneſs; I had been more dead than alive, at the idea only of the pain ſhe pretended to have felt. My parting with her was ſo tender! How was it poſſible for her not to be affected with it? How could ſhe have the barbarity

barity to abandon me to the emotions of deſpair, to which ſhe muſt think I ſhould become a prey? But, why be aſtoniſhed at the terrible depravation of an heart abandoned to ſin? Was I myſelf, leſs culpable than Roſella, who had racked the heart of my tender mother, and for ſix months plunged her into the utmoſt anguiſh? This reflection which I at preſent make, unfortunately did not occur at that time, or it would have ſpared me many afflictions, or would have ſanctified them. But to return to my narrative—

I went to the inn from whence the ſtage-coach ſet out, which was to carry me to the merchant's; and waited there an hour, which to me ſeemed an age. It was ſtill worſe when we were upon the road. Our coachman had parcels to deliver at twenty different places, ſo that we were two long hours travelling ſix miles. Being at laſt arrived at Brentford, our coachman aſked me, where I would pleaſe to be ſet down. I ſhowed him my direction, which he examined attentively; and then, told me, he had never heard of any ſuch people, as the merchant ſaid he lodged with. I was therefore obliged to run from door to door with my direction in my hand. Pleaſe to take notice, that this vil-

lage is a full mile and an half in length, and that, being obliged to ſtop continually, I was a great while before I got to the end of it. Wonder at my ſtupidity and blindneſs, I had not the leaſt ſuſpicion of the treachery that was intended; and, after being certain there was no other village of this name, I perſuaded myſelf there was ſome miſtake in the direction, and that the perſon I wanted, lived in ſome place, the name of which reſembled this. To heighten my misfortune, I ſaw my ſervant arrive, who told me, his miſtreſs had ſent him to deſire me not to ſtay dinner, and to return as ſoon as I had finiſhed my buſineſs, becauſe ſhe found herſelf worſe. Had I had wings I ſhould have flown to London; for want of this aſſiſtance, I rode poſt, and came to town in leſs than an hour. I had the maſter key of the houſe in my pocket, and attempted to open the door, but found it bolted within. I fancied that my ſervant had played me this trick; I did not dare knock at the door, for fear of diſturbing Roſella; I was, therefore, obliged to walk up and down the ſtreet, like a madman, kicking my heels, and curſing the footman. At laſt my impatience got the better of me; I went back to look for my ſervant, who was to return in the ſtage; the coach was arrived, but no ſervant, he had been ſet down at the turnpike.

I returned home like a man out of his ſenſes; and having knocked in vain ſeveral times, I deſired a neighbour to lend me a ladder, to get down into the area. I fly to Roſella's chamber, find the door open, and the room ſtript; that is to ſay, of our boxes, cloaths, and her toilet. Aſk me not what I then became. I was thunder-ſtruck, became motionleſs, and doubted not but I had been betrayed. Nevertheleſs, there were moments when I ſought another cauſe, or what I called my misfortune; and being unwilling to neglect any opportunity of clearing up this matter, I went to a ſhop a few doors off, to endeavour to get ſome information. While I was aſking uſeleſs queſtions, the penny poſt man knocked at our door, and the miſtreſs of the houſe calling him back, he gave me the following letter.

ROSELLA'S *Letter to the Baron* D'ASTIE.

I PITY your miſtake my poor baron, and will ſhow you that you have not loved an ungrateful perſon, by affording you the means of forgetting me; for your fooliſh paſſion might carry you to extremities, for which I ſhould be ſorry. I ſwear, my dear, I did not deceive you, when I ſaid I loved you; and you may boaſt of having

fixed my inconſtant diſpoſition for three whole weeks. After this time, ſurfeited with the violence of your fine ſentiments, I endeavoured through pure generoſity to diſſemble the change of mine. I have diſſembled long enough to think myſelf quit with you; but in truth, I was quite tired out, and ſhould have died of the ſpleen, notwithſtanding the little interludes I have managed, if I had diſſembled any longer. If any thing can conſole you, remember that your predeceſſors have not been ſo well treated; and that thoſe who ſucceed you muſt not expect ſo much complaiſance from me. Return and plant cabagges, my dear; it is the only thing I think you fit for. If I had thought you a man capable of ſurmounting ridiculous prejudices, I might have employed you uſefully for our common intereſt; but what could be done with a man of a ſcrupulous probity, who has not underſtanding enough to comprehend that every thing ought to give place to the neceſſity of enjoying the pleaſures of life; and, that every thing which procures them is lawful. Adieu, my dear, take my word for it, you will always be a fool.

Acknowledge, Madam, that I willingly undergo the whole ſhame of my fault. I am

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ſenſible how heartily you will laugh at reading this letter; which I ſhould have ſoftened, had I not rather expoſe myſelf to it, than be wanting in the ſincerity I promiſed you to obſerve. You muſt doubtleſs think that ſuch an epiſtle entirely extinguiſhed my love; it did not ſurvive this baſe letter a ſingle minute; indignation and ſhame were the only emotions I felt. I then recollected a thouſand circumſtances which ought to have given me an inſight into the character of this vile creature; ſhe had owned that the furniture which ſhe had taken away from Bourdeaux, did not belong to her, and had diverted herſelf with the exclamations of grief of the miſtreſs of the houſe, who, ſhe ſaid, was avarice itſelf. She had laughed at my reproaching her with having made me an accomplice in this piece of injuſtice; in ſhort, I found great difficulty to juſtify her to myſelf on ſeveral other occaſions, wherein I diſcovered that ſhe had no principle. As ſhe was extremely giddy headed, I fancied her heart had no ſhare in this diſcourſe; that it was a conſequence of the bad education ſhe had received, and that it would be an eaſy matter to rectify her ſentiments. Her letter convinced me that her morals were depraved and corrupted beyond all probability of amendment; and, I returned thanks to Heaven, for having ridded

ridded me, in ſpite of myſelf, of ſuch a dangerous creature.

I had only a moment to make theſe different reflections; for ſcarcely had I time to read my letter, before three men, who were loitering about, came up to me; and one of them tapped me on the ſhoulder, and told me, that he arreſted me by the king's order. I only underſtood theſe few words, to which he added a great many more, which I did not in the leaſt comprehend, though the charitable ſhopkeeper endeavoured to explain them to me. At laſt, a gentleman came who ſpoke both languages; he told me, that I was arreſted at the ſuit of the landlord where we lodged, to whom a quarter's rent was due; and that the man aſked me, whether I choſe to pay the debt, or give bail; and offered to keep me at his own houſe a few days, till I had acquainted my friends with the affair, and could procure bail.

I returned him thanks for this offer, his motive for which I was ignorant of; and at the ſame time acquainted him, that I ſhould not be any better able to pay the debt, or give ſecurity in a weeks time, than at preſent, ſince every

every thing in the world had been taken from me, except the cloaths on my back; and that being a foreigner, I had no acquaintance in England. This declaration reſtored to theſe people all their cuſtomary brutality, which had been ſuſpended through hopes of getting ſome money out of me, during the time I remained at their houſe; for my dreſs, which was very genteel, had deceived them, and they imagined I was capable of ſpending a great deal of money. The ſhopkeeper and ſome neighbours, who had aſſembled together, alone ſeemed touched with compaſſion, and collected among one another a guinea for me, which I at firſt obſtinately refuſed; and which he, who ſerved as an interpreter for me, forced me to accept, by telling me, that in priſon I ſhould have nothing allowed me towards my maintenance: I therefore received this alms (for things ought to be called by their proper names) and aſſured theſe charitable perſons, that I hoped God in his goodneſs would enable me to return them what they ſo generouſly lent me; for they were poor people, and this trifling ſum was conſiderable with regard to their ſituation in life.

The bailiff at the ſight of this guinea, made me an offer of his houſe a ſecond time, which my

my interpreter diſſuaded me from accepting, becauſe I had not more than ſufficient to defray the expences of ſuch a place above two days at fartheſt: I therefore deſired them to conduct me to priſon immediately; and the bailiffs, to puniſh me for having refuſed their offer, dragged me away in an ignominious manner, though I made no reſiſtance, and begged of them to let me have a coach, to ſpare me the ſhame of being expoſed to the eyes of the populace.

My ſituation, doubtleſs, appears very terrible to you; yet this was only the prelude to what I was to ſuffer. The ſame evening detainers were laid againſt me to the amount of twenty guineas, by ſeveral different perſons; ſo that, reckoning the expences of the arreſts, and the goal fees, I found myſelf a priſoner for forty guineas, without the leaſt hopes of being able to pay my debts; and with great propriety might have ſaid, on entering the priſon, *in ſæcula ſæculorum*. You will be ſurprized that I did not think of imploring my mother's aſſiſtance. I confeſs, madam, I ſhould have preferred death, to the ſhame of letting her know the extremity I was reduced to through my folly. An haughty obſtinacy perſuaded me, that myſelf alone ought to bear the whole weight

of

of the misfortunes I had brought upon my head; after all, ſaid I to myſelf, it is impoſſible they ſhould extend farther than the courſe of my life; it cannot be long, if what I am told is true. Entirely deprived of every reſource, I muſt die of hunger in the priſon, and this is my reſolution.

It was late when I arrived at the priſon. I was put into a room without a window, where was nothing to lie down upon, or even to ſit on, and there paſſed a night, which ſeemed to me ſo long, that I thought it would never have been over. As I ſat on the floor, every thing which had paſſed for the laſt ſix months, occurred to my imagination in ſo lively a manner, that it is ſurpriſing I was able to ſupport ſuch terrible impreſſions. From what a ſtate was I fallen? How immenſe did the diſtance ſeem, which ſeparated me from this happy ſtate! I ſounded my ſtrength, to try whether there remained any hopes of getting over it; and finding in myſelf only weakneſs, blindneſs, and impotence, I became a prey to deſpair: my crimes ſeemed to me of ſuch a nature, as to exclude me for ever from the mercy of God; I looked on myſelf as a victim deſtined to ſerve as an example to thoſe who ſhould be tempted to follow my ſteps.

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However great the chaſtiſement I experienced, I venture to ſay, I judged myſelf as rigorouſly as God himſelf would have done; if he had in the inſtant precipitated me into hell, I ſhould not have murmured in the leaſt, ſo ſenſible was I of deſerving this. My ſubmiſſion to my preſent misfortunes, aroſe therefore from a thorough conviction that I deſerved them; and when I had loſt all hopes of repairing my paſt faults, I took a firm reſolution not to commit a new one, by my murmurs, the injuſtice of which I ſhould have myſelf condemned.

Day ſurprized me in theſe thoughts: the goaler's ſervant opened the door of my room, which looked into a large yard, and told me I was at liberty to walk there. This trifling alleviation affected me but little, and I remained motionleſs in the ſame place, without wiſhing for, foreſeeing any thing, or paying the leaſt attention to the noiſe that was made in this yard, which was filled with a great number of priſoners. The goaler's ſervant, who opened the door, fancying I did not underſtand him, told thoſe who were walking about, that there was a new comer, who, according to all appearance, did not underſtand a word of Engliſh. A poor joiner,

joiner, who had been an inhabitant of this wretched place upwards of eight months, took pity on his countryman, for he thought I was a Frenchman, and entered my room; and after having ſaluted me very civilly, offered me his ſervice, and did it with ſuch an air of ſincerity, as overwhelmed me with gratitude. A perſon muſt be in a ſituation like mine to be thoroughly ſenſible of the value of a friend, who makes an offer of himſelf through pure generoſity: as to me, I conſidered this man as an angel, though his figure, dreſs, and language, declared him, as he really was, a man of mean birth and no education.

The ſentiments of my heart appeared in my countenance; and Dupont (for this was the young man's name) ſaid to me in his coarſe manner, Come, countryman, take courage; it is ten o'clock; in all probability, you have neither breakfaſted this morning, nor ſupped laſt night; do me the favour to drink a pint of beer with me; my example will comfort you, I am ſure: it is true, you have the air of a gentleman, and I am only a poor devil, that can't do a great deal; however, what little is in my power, I offer you chearfully: one ſhould not

not afflict one's ſelf beyond meaſure, elſe one might hang one's ſelf, like an Engliſhman.

Though I ſtrove not to follow Dupont, he dragged me into a room near mine, where he had made a joiner's bench and a ſeat, and forced me to eat a morſel; which little nouriſhment raiſed my ſpirits. During breakfaſt, Dupont, to excite my confidence, related by what unfortunate accident he came into priſon.

I came into England, ſaid he, to endeavour to get money, from the encouragement of ſeveral of my countrymen, who had brought home ſufficient to ſettle themſelves in their own country in a decent manner. The beginning did not anſwer my expectations; though I may ſay, without vanity, that I am no bad workman; but I was badly cloathed, and a ſhabby dreſs is no very good recommendation. A French taylor offered to let me have a ſuit of cloaths, for which I ſhould pay him whenever it ſuited me; and told me he had a ſuit ready made by him, which would fit me exactly. I did not think it right to incumber myſelf with this debt, becauſe I was fearful I ſhould not have it in my power to pay him, and thanked him for his kindneſs. The next day, while I was abroad enquir-

enquiring for work, the raſcal ſent the ſuit of cloaths to my lodgings: it was a great deal too tight and too ſhort for me; ſo that if I had been willing to have taken the ſuit, I could have made no uſe of it, wherefore I ſent it back the ſame day. The next morning this villain arreſted me, and wanted to oblige me to take the cloaths. I was brought to this place, where at firſt I made a very fooliſh figure. An honeſt Engliſhman, who underſtood both languages, comforted me, and deſired his lawyer to do me what ſervice he could; he accordingly went to find my rogue, but the bird was flown; and, fearing from me the ſame treatment I had ſuffered from him, had returned to France. I proved that I had not ordered this ſuit of cloaths. I was diſcharged by the court, and thought I had now regained my liberty. Not in the leaſt; juſtice will loſe nothing. I was informed that I muſt remain in priſon till I paid the goal fees. I in vain repreſented, that, having been arreſted unjuſtly, as had been proved to the ſatisfaction of the court, I ought not, in conſcience, to pay for the rods that had been employed to chaſtiſe me, when my innocence was known; but I ſpoke to the deaf: for my comfort, I was informed, that I was entitled to redreſs, from the perſon who had cauſed me to be arreſted, and that I might oblige him

to pay me my expences, or put him into goal. Fine reaſoning! Thoſe who talked thus, knew very well, that it was an impoſſibility, ſince the man was gone to France; and, beſides, as we ſay, where there is nothing, the king muſt loſe his right. One ought to ſay as much of the officers of juſtice, who are hardly juſt, ſince they have detained me eight months without allowing me any thing for my ſupport; and I ſhould have been ſtarved to death here, if it had not been for a maſter, who would give me half a crown a day if I had my liberty; but, taking an advantage of my confinement, generouſly allows me only a crown a week.

Dupont, after having repoſed this confidence in me, expected mine in return; but my affair was too delicate, to be entruſted to a ſtranger. I only told him my caſe was not like his, that I really owed what I was arreſted for, but that it was impoſſible for me to pay it, ſince I had been robbed in my abſence of every thing in the world; and that, as I knew no trade, I muſt expect to periſh with hunger, ſince I had no more than ſix and twenty ſhillings. That is ſomething however, replied Dupont; and if the people who arreſted you are inflexible, they will be forced to allow you ſomething towards your

your maintenance. I will ſpeak to my friend the lawyer, he loves the French; and notwithſtanding his profeſſion, is, I aſſure you, a very honeſt man: beſides, you may command the little I have; I pity ſuch a man as you, who is not accuſtomed to ſuffer hardſhips like a poor fellow as I am, who was born poor.

I embraced honeſt Dupont, and ſhed tears of gratitude; and, without accepting his offer, aſked a piece of ſervice of him, which would coſt him leſs, and which I had more preſſing occaſion for. My cloaths were very genteel, but I had only two ſhirts; one of which was very fine, and had laced ruffles. I was deſirous of exchanging my ſlender wardrobe, for a ſuit of cloaths more ſuitable to my condition, and a few ſhirts. Dupont ſpoke to ſome raſcally Jews, who go from priſon to priſon to cheat the priſoners, by ſelling goods to them very dear, and buying for little or nothing, what they want to get rid of. My new friend was ready to beat them, when they offered me no more than thirty-ſix ſhillings for my cloaths and ſhirt; the lace of my waiſtcoat alone was worth more; he therefore deſired me to have patience, and dictated a letter for me to his lawyer, who came to viſit us the next day: indeed,

deed, he was a man the leaſt fit for his profeſſion of any perſon I ever met with; he had a noble benevolent ſoul, which would not permit him to be guilty of the rapine, ſo common to the generality of his brethren, and ſettled more differences in a month, than they created miſchief in a year. I am extremely ſorry his name has ſlipped my memory.

This worthy man procured me ſome cloaths and a ballance in money, in exchange for mine; and having enquired who was my principal creditor, promiſed me to call on him. Unfortunately this creditor was gone a journey into the country for three months, ſo that I was informed that I muſt have patience till his return. Though I lived only on bread and water, I was ſenſible my money could not hold out ſo long; and thinking it leſs diſgraceful to earn my livelihood in any way whatever, than to be burthenſome to poor Dupont, whoſe allowance was already very ſpare, I ſought all poſſible means to avoid it.

There were in this priſon ſeveral perſons who lived in an expenſive manner, and remained there only to tire the patience of their creditors, and bring them to reaſonable terms: theſe people had neat apartments, and wanted for nothing.

nothing. I offered my ſervice to one of them, who ſpoke a little broken French, and promiſed to perfect him in this language in a very little time; he accepted my propoſal, and taking a liking to my converſation, generouſly invited me to his table. This gentleman, whoſe name was Nil, had a place which brought him in a very pretty income, but was arreſted through the extravagance of his wife, who had contracted large debts without his knowledge; and he inſiſted on his creditors making ſome abatement of their demands, becauſe they ought to have conſulted him before they ſupplied the extravagance of his wife. This perſon had three daughters who dreſſed very genteelly, and came to ſee him every now and then. It happened one day, that the eldeſt, as ſhe was coming to ſee him quite in a full dreſs, and without a hat, was catched in a great ſhower of rain, about two hundred yards from the priſon, and was quite wet through; her cloaths were ſoon dry; but, as ſhe had only a very ſmall cap on, her hair was quite out of curl, and I offered to dreſs it. During the ſix months I paſſed with Roſella, I often did her this piece of ſervice; and, as ſhe had a very good taſte for dreſs, I had learnt from her inſtructions to dreſs hair much better, than I ſhould have done from an

hair-dreſſer. The young lady was vaſtly pleaſed with my manner of dreſſing, and this inſpired her father with a thought, to which I owe all my happineſs.

Nil had a brother a few miles from Windſor, who was a peruke-maker by profeſſion; he had but little buſineſs in the winter; but the village which he lived in, and the environs thereof, were in ſummer full of families, who came from London, and employed him; ſo that he always kept a Frenchman to dreſs the ladies, becauſe the people of this nation have more taſte than the Engliſh. He knew that his brother wanted a journeyman, and his friendſhip for me induced him to write to his brother, in order to procure me this place, without my knowledge. During this interval, my principal creditor returned to town; and the charitable lawyer, whom I have mentioned, had perſuaded him to forgive me a debt which I was incapable of paying. My other creditors, low people, would abate nothing of their demands; ſo that I was ſtill detained for twenty guineas, including the goal fees. Nil propoſed to his brother to pay this ſum for me, on condition that I ſhould article myſelf to him for two years. Miſs Nil, whom I had already dreſſed, pretended to be deſirous of continuing under my hands; and Mr. Nil the

younger was ſo pleaſed with my ſkill, that he conſented to every thing his brother propoſed.

I have mentioned nothing of what paſſed in my breaſt during the three months and an half that I remained in priſon, where I thought I muſt have ſtaid till there was an act of grace, which was not expected to happen ſoon. Nothing that I ſuffered outwardly, came near the torments which preyed on my ſoul. Whatever endeavours I uſed to re-animate my hope, my ingratitude towards God and my mother, appeared to me ſo enormous, that I did not think it poſſible ever to obtain pardon. How dreadful a ſtate! How often did that happen to me, which is related of a celebrated Hereſiarch, with reſpect to Heaven. I have loſt it through my own fault, and beyond all poſſibility of recovery, ſaid I to myſelf ſhedding a torrent of tears. Alas! I might ſay with the prophet king, that my bread was bedewed with my tears. This affliction was ſo violent, as to almoſt annihilate every other ſenſation: the pride ſo natural to man was quite extinguiſhed in me, and any perſon might have ſhewn the greateſt contempt for me, without my thinking I was treated unjuſtly. I was therefore thankful, when my protector informed me what his brother would do in my

favour, and did not think myſelf above the employment which was propoſed to me; and which was ſtill too good for a wretch who had with juſtice been driven from ſociety. I had the pleaſure to ſee Dupont releaſed before me: ſome charitable perſons paid his fees, and I left him with a maſter, in whoſe ſervice he got a comfortable livelihood.

For four months after I arrived at my new habitation, I had but little employment, and certainly did not get as much money for my maſter as I coſt him. I muſt here do the Engliſh the juſtice to refute a prejudice which I myſelf entertained as well as others; and declare, that it is impoſſible to find hearts more eſſentially good, and more inclined to aſſiſt thoſe in whom they remark good morals, and a love of induſtry. This remark is not in the leaſt miſplaced, madam, though I have the honour to ſay it to an Engliſh woman. You are acquainted only with perſons of your own rank, and perhaps perſuade yourſelf, that the lower kind of people in England have hearts as hard and rough as their outſides. You do them injuſtice; they pity the unfortunate whom they think virtuous; I was upwards of a year in miſery; and muſt declare, from my own experience, that they are very compaſſionate and obliging: it is true, they

do a ſervice with the tone and air with which a Frenchman would expreſs an injury; but this is becauſe their unpoliteneſs is equal to their benevolence. Unhappily, this firſt quality conceals the laſt, which is the reaſon why they are thought cruel and barbarous.

After I had been ſome weeks with Mr. Nil, he took notice to me that I did not go to church. I thought, ſaid he, you had been a French refugée; but according to all appearance, I am miſtaken, and you are a Papiſt. Though I was afraid I ſhould make him my enemy, by acknowledging my religion, I did not heſitate a moment to do it; I ſhould have been aſhamed to have diſſembled in ſuch a matter. I was agreeably ſurprized at his anſwer. My lad, ſaid he, I have known many very honeſt people among the Catholics, and I don't like you a bit worſe than I did before, now I know you are one; but whatever our religion is, one ought to diſcharge the duties it requires: you have a chapel in the next town, which is ſerved by a very honeſt man, whoſe good conduct edifies the whole neighbourhood, I will give you liberty to go there every Sunday. Believe me, one ought not to be remiſs in this article: negligence in religion conducts to libertiniſm; and I

ſhould be ſorry you ſhould fall into a diſorderly way of life, through your being in my ſervice.

I ought not, madam, to endeavour to conceal from you the depth of the abyſs into which I was fallen; I had not entered into a place of worſhip ſince my arrival in England, and I felt a general tremor, when my maſter propoſed to me to aſſiſt at this awful myſtery. My awakened faith made me fear, leſt lightnings ſhould dart from the altar, which I was going to pollute with my looks; in a word, I was in the ſituation which Montalvo deſcribes in ſuch an affecting manner; yet I was afraid of giving offence to my maſter, and pretended to be very thankful for the permiſſion he gave me, determined however not to profit by it. Alas! ſin deſtroys our natural and acquired qualities. This was the firſt time in my life I had deſcended ſo low as to be guilty of a lye; I naturally loved truth, and this good diſpoſition had been cultivated carefully by my mother, ſo that I had an averſion for the leaſt diſſimulation: this averſion gave way to the dread which the ſight of my judge inſpired me with; it ſeemed to me as if his miniſter would have read my unworthineſs in my countenance, and would have driven me from the company of the faithful, from whence I had already voluntarily baniſhed myſelf.

I have already mentioned that my maſter paid for my board, at a little inn where he eat himſelf, and which was the only one in the village. One day while I was there getting my dinner, a poſt-chaiſe arrived, attended by a ſervant on horſeback. This man, after having looked at me earneſtly ſeveral times, exclaimed, I am not miſtaken, it is our dear baron d'Aſtie; and immediately diſmounting, was with me before I had time to examine his face attentively. He was a ſervant of my father's, whom my mother had kept until we loſt our law-ſuit; and who, full of gratitude for the favours he had received, came every year from Bourdeaux to renew his aſſurances of the moſt reſpectful attachment. Good God! cried he, in what a ſituation do I find the ſon of my worthy maſter! I immediately deſired him to be ſilent; and, as his maſter was to dine with a friend who lived in this village, he made haſte to get his buſineſs done, in order to return to me. What would not your diſtracted mother give to have the pleaſure of ſeeing you again! ſaid he: Alas! this worthy lady has been in a languiſhing ſtate ever ſince your departure; her tears are her food, and if you defer letting her hear from you, you will have her death to reproach yourſelf with. Alas! my dear friend, replied I, ſhe is thoroughly avenged; and the curſe, which ſhe no

doubt has pronounced againſt me, has been attended with terrible conſequences. Inſtead of curſing you, ſaid Henry, ſhe inceſſantly prays to Heaven for your return. Be aſſured, my dear maſter, notwithſtanding the length of the journey, you would ſoon ſee her if ſhe knew you was here; can you have the cruelty to ſuffer her to end in grief her days which flowed ſo quietly before your flight? Haſten to reſtore her to life by your preſence; and, if I can be of any uſe towards haſtening this good deſign, do not ſpare me; my perſon, my little fortune, and even my life, is at your ſervice.

I embraced this faithful ſervant with a torrent of tears, which relieved my heart from the horrid weight that oppreſt me, and confeſſed to him the whole of my ill conduct, and the misfortunes which I had undergone in conſequence thereof. Henry interrupted me ſeveral times, to curſe Roſella, and from him I learnt the infamous life ſhe had led at Bourdeaux. He informed me alſo that my mother knew I had fled with her; but had not been able to find out where I had ſecreted myſelf, notwithſtanding her endeavours for that purpoſe.

Henry entreated me to ſet out for my mother's immediately; and, thinking that what I was indebted to my maſter was the only obſtacle to

my return, inſiſted upon advancing me that ſum. You will find, by reading my letter to my mother, what were the reaſons which prevented my accepting his offer. I recommended ſecrecy to him, with reſpect to my ſituation, and gave him my word that I would write directly to my mother, and throw myſelf at her feet as ſoon as poſſible, and promiſed to let him hear from me every now and then, while he remained in London, where my maſter propoſed to ſtay the whole winter.

I came from this converſation more caſt down and weakened, than if I had ſuffered a long illneſs; and at my return, my maſter ſcarcely knew me. But the change of my mind was ſtill greater; the aſſurance of a pardon from my tender mother, ſeemed an earneſt of that which God was willing to grant me; and bluſhing to have deſpaired of his mercy, I took a firm reſolution to reap the advantage of it as ſoon as poſſible. I had the whole afternoon to myſelf. I took this opportunity to wait on Mr. Baker, who gave me encouragement, and ſhowed me, that of all my crimes, I ought to bewail the moſt bitterly, my deſpair of God's mercy. He undertook to add a letter of his own, to that which I wrote to my mother, of both which I ſend you a copy.

Mr. BAKER's *Letter to the Baroneſs* d'ASTIE.

MADAM, A prodigal ſon overwhelmed with ſhame and grief for his paſt ill conduct, borrows my voice to implore your mercy and forgiveneſs. I venture to aſſert, that God has already granted it to his ſincere repentance, and I cannot think you will be more inexorable. The greatneſs of his fault had plunged him into deſpair; for upwards of a year that he has been ſeparated from the wretch who was the cauſe of his flight, he would have attempted to move Heaven and you madam to compaſſion, if he had thought his crimes capable of pardon. God, moved, doubtleſs, with the fervency of your prayers, has not ſuffered him to reſt quietly in his guilt; and I conſider the extreme miſery to which he has been reduced as a ſpecial inſtance of grace. He would not heſitate a moment ſetting out to throw himſelf at your feet, did not honour and juſtice oblige him to fulfil his engagements with a man who has taken him out of priſon, where he was confined for debt. This honeſt man, a barber by trade, has advanced him twenty guineas, on condition that he ſhould article himſelf to him for two years, to dreſs ladies hair, in which he ſucceeds very well. If to have advanced the remainder

mainder of this ſum would have been ſufficient, I ſhould have found means to have ſent him to you before; but this would have ruined his maſter, who could not immediately have found another perſon to ſupply his place; and perhaps never will be able to replace him to the ſatisfaction of his cuſtomers. If you permit me, madam, to acquaint you with my opinion on this matter, I think you ought to truſt to Providence. He feels the humiliation of his ſtate to the very marrow of his bones, if I may expreſs myſelf thus: he ought to drink to the very dregs, the cup which has been prepared as a puniſhment for his faults. Be eaſy about him; he has ſo fully placed his confidence in me, that I have the compaſſion of a father for him; and did not the duties of the holy miniſtry, which I have the honour of exerciſing, though unworthy thereof; I ſay, did not my duty induce me to take particular care of him; yet, his good qualities have ſo attached me to him, that I conſider him as doubly my neighbour.

Be ſatisfied concerning his faith, it has neither been ſhaken, nor runs any riſk of being ſo. They are leſs induſtrious to make proſelytes in England than in any other proteſtant country. Beſides his maſter has no diſlike to the Catho-

lics; as he is entirely ignorant himself of the doctrines of the church of England, which religion he profeſſes, there is no danger of his attempting to make your ſon adopt them. Moreover, this ignorance is general enough to inſpire you with confidence, even though Mr. d'Aſtie had not been ſo well inſtructed. Conviction of mind has no ſhare in the converſion of any one here, and the Engliſh proſelytes are induced thereto from their depravity of heart alone. Thank God, your ſon runs no riſk on this head, and his converſion is, in my opinion, ſo ſincere, that it may be depended upon for ſome time at leaſt, for human frailty is great.

I am, with the utmoſt reſpect,

MADAM,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

BAKER, *Prieſt.*

The Baron d'ASTIE's *Letter to the Baroneſs* d'ASTIE, *his mother.*

OH! moſt reſpectable of all women! Oh! deareſt, and yet moſt injured of mother's! how ſhall a ſon ſo ungrateful as I have proved, be able to expreſs his repentance? How exquiſite ſoever my remorſe, can it equal the pangs with which your tender heart has been racked for theſe two years, that, hiding myſelf from your goodneſs,

I have

I have followed the painful road of vice? Ah! however vile the condition is, to which I have reduced myſelf by my folly, it would ſtill have charms for me, if I could get rid of the tormenting idea of having diſturbed the ſerenity of your days. You have been ſuperior to the loſs of your rank; I have ſeen you ſupport, without murmuring, the afflictions inſeparable from a middling ſtate of life, that nearly approached poverty; alas, to me it was reſerved to find the ſenſible part of your ſoul. The loſs of your ſon alone could make you ſhed tears, which the moſt unfortunate events had not been able to force from you. How bitterly did I weep, what anguiſh did I feel, when the faithful Henry gave me the affecting account of the dreadful ſituation to which my flight reduced you! Chance, or rather Providence, conducted him to my ſight in the retinue of a nobleman, whom he has ſerved ſome months, and this was the moment which God had marked from all eternity in his mercy, to revive, through him and you, my truſt in him, which was almoſt entirely extinguiſhed. This was the greateſt of my crimes, and the only one in which I have perſevered. Yes, madam, for upwards of a year I have deteſted from the bottom of my heart my other faults; and without hopes of appeaſ-

ng Heaven, have carefully avoided irritating it more. I return thanks to God for having broke my ſhameful bonds, and ſubmit with pleaſure to the humiliating conſequences of my ill conduct; and death would to me be preferable to the heinouſneſs of a relapſe.

I have been cruelly deceived and abandoned. I have loved the moſt infamous wretch in the whole world. Excuſe any farther account of my ill conduct. Regret more than ſhame ſtops my mouth; I am unwilling to pollute your mind with a recital of the infamous life I led for ſix months in a total forgetfulneſs of God and my ſalvation. Ungrateful towards my Creator, who from my infancy had loaded me with the moſt precious favours, is it to be wondered at, that I was ſo to you? Alas! my whole life, however long it may be, will not ſuffice to expiate my faults; you ſhall behold me bewail them to my lateſt breath; would to Heaven I could ſee you this moment; but, my Anannias approves my motives for delaying my departure, and will inform you about them. I do not in the leaſt murmur at the length of my exile; the pain which your abſence cauſes me, will in part expiate my offences, for this is what gives me the greateſt uneaſineſs.

I pre-

I preſume to join to this confeſſion of my ill conduct, a petition for a favour which will contribute to calm my remorſe. I have innocently been concerned in an act of injuſtice, and have become an accomplice in a robbery, by helping the wretched partner of my flight to carry off effects which I thought were her own property: though I have in no reſpect benefited by this robbery, yet, I think myſelf obliged to make the owner ſatisfaction for the loſs ſhe has ſuſtained. You deſtined a ſum for my maintenance at Bourdeaux; may I venture to intreat you to ſacrifice a part of it, to diſcharge me from the dreadful burden of having wronged another? I flatter myſelf you will be better able to do it, as all your ſchemes for ſettling me at a diſtance from you are vaniſhed. My weakneſs has determined my vocation, and I am too much afraid of the treachery of my ſenſes, to expoſe myſelf thereto a ſecond time. I chearfully dedicate the remainder of my life to rural employments, and leave the choice of a proper companion for me, entirely to you, for I cannot again truſt myſelf on ſuch an important concern.

Mr. Baker keeps up my ſpirits, in hopes of a favourable anſwer. Alas! I ſhould not ſurvive a ſentence ſuch as I deſerve, if goodneſs did not temper juſtice.

Baroneſs d'Aſtie's Anſwer to the Baron d'Aſtie her ſon.

THE reproaches with which you load yourſelf, my dear ſon, prevent any from me; and your happy return to virtue recompenſes the uneaſineſs your ill conduct gave me. Comprehend by this the exceſs of my joy. What thankſgivings do you owe to God for the repentance he has granted you, for the happy opportunities he has procured you, and for your life, which he has ſpared, in order that you might improve it. The particulars of your ill conduct, with which you was afraid to acquaint me, I knew before from Henry, whom you had entruſted them with, and who wrote an account of it to me directly; ſo that I received his letter at the ſame time with Mr. Baker's and yours. I have returned ſincere thanks to God, for having granted ſuch a charitable paſtor to my poor ſtrayed ſheep, which he has brought back into the fold. Be governed entirely by his advice, my dear child. A firſt fault gives, indeed, an experience which, though fatal, may be nevertheleſs uſeful; but, it weakens the ſoul, and renders it leſs fit to reſiſt ſin. Yours will long be ſenſible of the ſtains it has contracted; they have increaſed that weakneſs of ſoul which

renders

renders you ſuſceptible of every impreſſion. I ſhall not be eaſy about you, till I ſee you ſettled by marriage; therefore, I expect your compliance with the efforts I am going to make, to get you out of your preſent ſituation, if it can be done with the conſent of the honeſt man who took you out of priſon, and without doing him the utmoſt prejudice: I refer this to Mr. Baker's prudence, to whom I have communicated my intentions, and into whoſe hands I reſign the authority God has given me over you.

If I had not promiſed in the beginning of my letter, not to reproach you, I ſhould complain bitterly of your diſtruſt of me. Am I not your friend, as well as your mother? Ah! had you been witneſs to what I felt on your account! My firſt motion was to throw myſelf on my knees, and I remained in this poſture, as it were out of my ſenſes, ſo long, as to make poor Mary very uneaſy. I might have been taken, like the mother of Samuel, for a drunken woman, the agitations of my countenance were ſo extraordinary. Even at preſent, I have not entirely recovered my ſpirits, and am ſubject to ſuch an univerſal trembling, that I have been forced to borrow the aſſiſtance of Mr. Duboc the younger

to

to write to you. Don't let this give you any uneaſineſs, I am very well, except this trembling.

(Mr. DUBOC *writes as from himſelf.)*

I HOPE my dear ſon will put entire confidence in what I ſay, your dear and reſpectable mother is quite of danger. It is true we were under ſome apprehenſions for her yeſterday, and it was neceſſary to bleed her; but this entirely removed her diſorder: ſhe had reſiſted the tranſports of her grief, but could not ſupport her joy. She is at preſent ſo well recovered, as to refuſe my aſſiſtance to write to Mr. Baker, and intends to do it herſelf, the day after to-morrow, therefore you may make yourſelf eaſy about her health.

My brother and I have ſhared your mother's joy; it will not be compleat until we have the pleaſure of embracing our dear child, with the ſame ſentiments of joy as the father of the prodigal ſon experienced. We hope this eclipſe of virtue will ſtrengthen you in good, the remainder of your life, by convincing you how little dependance you ought to place on your own ſtrength. We expect, with impatience, the effect of the propoſal which we have deſired Mr. Baker to make to the perſon, to whom you have

have articled yourſelf; and whatever he requires, we will endeavour to comply with. Our very humble reſpects to this worthy paſtor.

(The Baroneſs finiſhes herſelf.)

Only obſerve my fine writing; I riſk it to remove my ſon's uneaſineſs, and to ſign the pardon which the moſt tender and indulgent of mothers grants him.

The Baroneſs d'ASTIE'S *Letter to Mr.* BAKER.

SIR,

WHEN Meſſrs. Duboc engaged for me two days ago, they certainly muſt have depended on a miracle; I was ſo bad, that they had juſt adminiſtred the ſacraments to me. God has heard the prayers of our holy paſtors; and, as my caſe was a ſudden violent oppreſſion of the heart, attended with an apoplectic fit, the phyſician gave hopes of my recovery, after three bleedings in the foot, which relieved me. I take the earlieſt opportunity, Sir, to return you my ſincere and hearty thanks, for your goodneſs to my poor child, and to entreat you to keep up his ſtaggering faith. My letter, as far as I can recollect, was capable of reviving his miſtruſt; my head

head was extremely disordered when I dictated it, and my apoplectic fit had not so entirely left me, as to leave no room to fear a return. Since my son has confessed to you all the events of his life, you must be sensible, from my excessive tenderness for him, what I must have suffered during his absence; and, what a surprizing effect your letter and his had on me; I entirely lost my senses, and was three days in the utmost danger. Everlasting praise be given to the eternal goodness which has preserved my life, to bestow on me the pleasure of embracing my repenting son.

God has confounded my human prudence, by annihilating all the measures I had taken to remove my son from the station in which he had placed him. However, I am of opinion, after the most severe scrutiny, that prejudice had no share in my proceedings. I measure the glory of an action only by its utility to society; I think it our Creator's intention, that men in a state of society should employ themselves for the happiness of each other, in obedience to the orders of him who is goodness and charity in his essence. Thoroughly affected with this sentiment, the destination of my son, to me seemed more noble than that of a general or a magistrate.

trate. Theſe are employed to repair the ills which avarice produces; he who becomes the legiſlator of mankind, by his diſcourſe and example prevents them. If I had abided by this ſentiment, my ſon had never quitted this ſtate; but, as it is dangerous to rely too much on ones judgment, I ſacrificed my opinion in favour of the ideas commonly received, and perſuaded myſelf that it was my duty to endeavour to place my ſon in an employment more ſuitable to his birth. Notwithſtanding, I don't know whether this reaſon alone would have been ſufficient to overcome my reluctance, to expoſe him to the dangers of the great world; but, I had another alſo, and both together prevailed on me to conſent.

With the beſt natural diſpoſition in the world, my ſon poſſeſſes the moſt lively paſſions. Celibacy would have been a dangerous ſtate for him; but, how could I properly marry him where we reſided? Our country girls, for the moſt part, poſſeſſed the virtues of their condition, but wanted thoſe which were neceſſary for the rank in life, to which a marriage with my ſon would have raiſed them. We are ſurrounded, indeed, with poor gentry, among whom I could eaſily have procured him a wife; but,

but, I could not think of this without horror. They not only were as clowniſh, ill-bred, and ignorant as the farmers daughters, but were inſupportably proud; which made me dread both for him and myſelf, the neceſſity of paſſing our lives with one of them. I imagined that I had found a juſt medium; the lawyer to whom I ſent my ſon, had a virtuous wife, who had given her daughters an excellent education; they had been brought up ſtrangers to the great world, in a love of induſtry, and domeſtic employments, which are proper for all women, eſpecially for thoſe of ſmall fortunes. My whole ambition was, that he might take a fancy to one of theſe young ladies; I formed a charming proſpect of the ſweets that I ſhould taſte in the ſociety of a daughter-in-law capable of reliſhing our way of life; and, perhaps, depended too much on the little ſchemes I ſhould put into execution, in conſequence thereof. I repeat it, God has overturned all my projects, and I perceive no way of ſettling this dear child, ſo as to make him happy. He muſt therefore be truſted to Providence, and this is the reſolution I embrace. In my opinion, it is jealous of the reſource which I have ſaved for him; I muſt, therefore, renounce it. I mean, Sir, the ſum which I depoſited to ſettle my ſon; I chearfully

fully ſacrifice it to juſtice, and to the hopes of ſeeing him the ſooner. By the account that he ſent me of the goods which were carried away from the houſe where Roſella dwelt, I conceive about fifty pounds will make the owner a proper ſatisfaction. I beg you would offer the remainder to my ſon's maſter, in order to indemnify him for the loſs he ſhall ſuſtain by my ſon's abſence. I hope he will take pity on a diſtracted mother, who would offer him millions as a recompenſe, if ſhe poſſeſſed them, and would ſtill think herſelf in his debt, for the ſervice he has done her ſon, by taking him out of priſon. But, if you ſhould be of opinion that he cannot, without too great a prejudice, deprive himſelf of my ſon's aſſiſtance, till the bad weather drives the company, who in ſummer reſide thereabouts, back to London; I muſt offer this croſs to the Lord, and wait ſome months longer; for I would on no account have him diſpleaſe his benefactor, by leaving him without his conſent. If this misfortune ſhould happen, the only comfort I ſhall have, will conſiſt in a firm confidence that you will continue your charitable care of him; be his father, I conjure you; I give up into your hands all the authority which God has given me over him, and ſhall be as eaſy, as it is poſſible to be in circumſtances like mine.

Pray

Pray desire my son to write to me as often as possible; I hope you will accompany his letters with a line from yourself. Ah! if my submission to those who direct me did not detain me here, I should not fear the dangers of a long journey to have the pleasure of embracing him the sooner and assuring you, by word of mouth, that nothing can equal my gratitude for the trouble you have taken to bring my poor strayed sheep back to the fold—I am, with respect,

Yours, &c.

Mr. BAKER's *Letter to the Baroness* d'ASTIE.

YES, madam, Providence which had undertaken in a particular manner the care of your son, has showed itself jealous of the precautions which prudence induced you to take for his establishment. It had greater designs on him, and has began to manifest them in such a surprizing manner, that we ought absolutely to trust him to its care; I say we, madam. This amiable young man, by honouring me with the sentiments of a tender and dutiful son, has kindled in my breast the tenderness and affection of a father. Like you, I have pursued the narrow views of human prudence; and, like you, have been deceived thereby. What a chain of events have I to relate, and what happiness do I foresee

foreſee for you? You placed your authority in my hands, madam; I have made ſuch uſe of it, as ſecures the ſalvation and felicity of your ſon, and procures you ſuch a daughter in law, as you would yourſelf have choſe: a young lady whoſe diſtinguiſhed beauty and high birth are her leaſt qualifications; a young lady who would be one of the richeſt heireſſes, if her duty did not diſpoſſeſs her of ſeveral millions; I ſay duty, but I ought to make uſe of another word. Madam, your daughter-in-law, without being wanting in her duty, might reſerve to herſelf immenſe riches; a deſire of practiſing all the virtues in the moſt eminent degree, renders her as poor as your ſon. I ſhould not declare, without trembling ſuch a marriage to a lady, leſs ſenſible than you of the vanity of every thing except virtue; but, after the knowledge of your character, which I have received from the baron, I ſhould think myſelf guilty of a piece of injuſtice, was I to fear your accuſing me with having paid more regard to your ſon's inclination, than to the intereſt of his fortune. Learn, madam, by what ſteps Divine Wiſdom has conducted this affair, and hope that it will finiſh as happily as it has began.

As ſoon as I received the letter which you honoured me with, I prepared myſelf to uſe my utmoſt efforts to diſengage Mr. d'Aſtie; I ſhould have ſet out that very day, but the duties of my function confining me all day, I wrote him word he ſhould ſee me the next day. Judge my ſurprize when I ſaw him in the evening about ten o'clock arrive at my houſe, in the utmoſt confuſion; a circumſtance which ſhowed he had ſomething extraordinary to communicate to me. Nothing could be more ſo. Returning home at day-break from dreſſing a bride, he had met in a lonely place a young woman, or rather, he ſaid, an angel. Her dreſs, though in diſorder, declared her a perſon of quality; ſhe was frightned at the ſight of him, and offered him her purſe, taking him for a robber, or ſomething worſe; at laſt, the neceſſity of an immediate and ſafe aſylum, had obliged this young lady to accept his offer of his chamber, where ſhe had been the whole day.

You know your ſon; to penetrate the ſentiments of his heart does not require much ſtudy, they are marked on his countenance. It was therefore eaſy for me to perceive the impreſſion this unknown lady had made on him; and I acknowledge it filled me with apprehenſion. We

have in the neighbourhood two bad houſes, which are receptacles for diſorderly women; and it happens ſometimes that they are cruelly treated by the men whom debauchery induces to frequent theſe places; I therefore at firſt thought this perſon was one of thoſe unfortunate creatures, whom the fear of ſome deſerved bad treatment, had forced to fly. The baron directly perceived my thoughts, and without giving me time to ſpeak, ſaid: Ah, Sir! be careful how you conceive unjuſt ſuſpicions; to ſuſpect Miſs Darby, would be to accuſe virtue itſelf—— I interrupted him in my turn, What, is Miſs Darby the perſon to whom you have afforded an aſylum? I have not the honour to know her perſonally; but, for theſe ſix months that this lady has lived in the neighbourhood, ſhe has been the edification thereof; I hardly hear any thing elſe talked of except her virtues and good actions. How could ſuch a perſon poſſibly be reduced to ſuch an extremity? I am ignorant, replied the baron, of the motives which induced her to eſcape from her father's houſe; my reſpect prevented me from aſking any queſtions. By her orders, I went to Old Windſor; the whole place was in an uproar, on account of the flight of this charming perſon's mother, who had juſt gone off with a young fellow, whom her

daughter was to have married the very night she made her escape. I learnt from her chamber-maid, that Miss Darby had freely consented to this marriage, and that she could attribute her flight to nothing but a letter that she received an hour before the ceremony was to be performed. Mr. Darby gives out that his daughter has gone off with a lover; I have proof to the contrary, since I found her alone; besides, one need only see her, to be satisfied she is the most prudent, as well as most charming of all her sex.

You do the lady justice, replied I to the baron, and her mother is also a woman of distinguished excellence. Her father is supposed to be but so so; and I make no doubt he has been the occasion of his wife's and daughter's flight; but, my dear friend, I am afraid of the consequences of such an accident, with respect to you! Miss Darby is immensely rich——And I have not the temerity to aspire to her hand, replied the baron; I am desirous only of serving her, and of placing her in a safe asylum, and will die of grief that I am unworthy of her. This is rather too precipitate a resolution, said I; suppose her heart should not be already engaged, who knows how far gratitude might carry her. Not to make this letter a volume, I shall inform you that I

saw

ſaw Miſs Darby the next morning, and learnt with admiration, that ſhe had expoſed herſelf to ſo many dangers, to avoid the crime of marrying an apoſtate prieſt, whoſe ſtate had been concealed from her, and whom ſhe imagined a man of quality, through her father's aſſurance, who purſues her as his greateſt enemy, in order to appropriate to himſelf the great eſtate ſhe inherits from one of her aunts, who was a catholic like her; and that this heroine was deſirous of purchaſing the return of her father's love, at the expence of her whole fortune; that ſhe could not make him a ceſſion of her fortune, unleſs ſhe married, and, that not being able to flatter herſelf with the hopes of an huſband of equal rank when ſhe was deſtitute of the advantages of fortune, ſhe was determined to conſider virtue only in the perſon with whom ſhe united her fate. I had only to applaud the choice ſhe had made of your ſon, whoſe rank ſhe was ignorant of, when there was reaſon to imagine that her father ſuſpected her aſylum; and, as ſhe could not decently travel about except with an huſband, I determined to marry her to the baron immediately, and make the young couple depart that very night, taking upon myſelf to ſatisfy his maſter. You will accuſe me, perhaps, of being too precipitate, madam; ſuſpend your judg-

judgment I conjure you, till you have learnt by a more circumſtantial account the impoſſibility of waiting for your conſent in form. The young people will paſs a few days at my mother's, to whom I have recommended them. I have only acquainted you in general terms with the misfortunes of your virtuous daughter-in-law; I haſten to the aſſiſtance of her virtuous mother, who ſhares with her the hatred of an unjuſt father, and might perhaps fall a victim to it. I am, with the moſt profound reſpect,

Madam,

Yours, &c.

You ſee, madam, by reading theſe letters, that Mr. Baker, without being guilty of indiſcretion, had a right to diſpoſe of me, without waiting for my mother's conſent, ſince ſhe had remitted to him all her authority over me, and had acquainted him ſufficiently with her views concerning me, to convince him that by taking this ſtep he ſhould perfectly fulfil them. He let her know by a ſecond letter, the reſolution we had taken to retire to my dear Clariſſa's tutor, and gave her a full account of every thing which my wife has informed you of. Therefore, madam d'Aſtie ſent us her conſent to

Bourdeaux,

Bourdeaux, without the leaſt heſitation; which ſhe certainly would not have done, as Clariſſa has remarked, if ſhe had not been acquainted with the character and virtues of her whom I was about to give her for a daughter and companion.

You know the happy concluſion of our adventures. I am very much afraid that I have been guilty of an indiſcretion, in giving you too true an account of my errors. You will ſay, doubtleſs, Oh! this libertine does not deſerve my Clariſſa. I am of your opinion, madam; ſhe might have met with an huſband more worthy of her; but, had ſhe had an opportunity of chuſing from amongſt all mankind, ſhe could not have found one deſerving of her, one who would have been more ſenſible of her value, or more firmly reſolved than myſelf, to adore her without dimunition, the reſt of his life.

The two friends left off writing, becauſe lady Balfour went to viſit her friend, along with Mrs. Darby, and ſtaid there a conſiderable time.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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